

Saturday July 6 1996

Abu Dhabi D 6.50	Hong Kong H 25	Osaka O 1.00
Albania L 2.50	Hungary F 200	Pakistan P 70
Australia A 55	India I 105	Poland Z 5.00
Austria A 55	Indonesia I 55	Portugal P 2.00
Belgium B 50	Iran I 5.50	Romania R 2.00
Canada C 1.25	Israel I 1.50	Saudi Arabia S 10
Chad C 12.50	Japan J 150	Slovenia S 55
Cyprus C 1.00	Korea K 1.50	Slovakia S 55
Czechia C 12.50	Latvia L 5	Spain S 225
Denmark D 15	Lithuania L 50	Sweden S 15
Dubai D 5.50	Malaysia M 55	Switzerland S 5
Egypt E 10	Netherlands N 55	Taiwan T 80
Finland F 10	Norway N 5	Thailand T 80
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The Guardian

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The million dollar woman

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Smear campaign sparks safety fears over Dalai Lama's UK visit

Madeline Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

MEMBERS of a British-based Buddhist sect are behind an aggressive international smear campaign to undermine the Dalai Lama — one of the world's most revered religious figures and political leader of Tibet — ahead of his visit to the UK this month.

The Dalai Lama is accused of being a "ruthless dictator" and an "oppressor of religious freedom" in direct contradiction to his message of religious tolerance, according to a spokesman for an organization called the Shugden Supporters Community, based in Pocklington, Yorkshire, which has been distributing press releases to 400 worldwide news outlets.

Members of the Shugden Supporters Community (SSC) belong to one of the fastest-growing and richest sects in the UK called the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT) whose headquarters are in Ulverston, Cumbria.

The sect has expanded dramatically since it was founded in 1981, and is now the biggest Buddhist organisation in the UK with more than 200 affiliated centres at home and more than 50

abroad. Membership is put at about 3,000.

The founder of the NKT is a Tibetan monk, Geshe Kelsang, who has lived in Britain since the late seventies.

Kelsang is in almost permanent semi-retreat in Cumbria and speaks little English, although he is the author of 16 books on Buddhism, two of which have reached the UK bestseller lists.

Former members maintain that the Department of Social Security has unknowingly played a critical part in funding the NKT's rapid expansion. NKT associates have acquired at least five large properties in the last year and

a significant proportion of the 300-odd residents of their centres claim housing benefit of up to £50 a week.

The benefit is paid as rent and used to service the large mortgages on properties. Among the properties acquired recently is Ashe Hall in Derbyshire, a neo-Jacobean mansion in 38 acres.

Organisers are concerned for the safety of the Dalai Lama during his week-long visit to the UK, starting on July 15. There have been threats from the SSC of demonstrations in London and Manchester where he is scheduled to speak before large audiences.

At a demonstration last month outside the Office of Tibet in London, hundreds chanted anti-Dalai Lama slogans and carried placards saying "Your smiles charm, your actions harm."

The SSC maintains that the Dalai Lama has banned a centuries-old Buddhist practice and claims that Tibetans in India have been dismissed from their jobs, monks expelled from their monasteries, houses searched and statues destroyed.

The Tibetan government-in-exile's London representatives at the Office of Tibet vigorously deny the allegations. Amnesty International says

the SSC has yet to substantiate its allegations.

At disputes between Kelsang and the Dalai Lama — the latter has the backing of the majority of the Tibetan religious and political establishment — is the spiritual practice of worshipping a deity called Dorge Shugden.

To supporters of the Dalai Lama, this practice has become demonic. The Dalai Lama has warned his students against it and says this spiritual practice threatens his life and the future of the Tibetan people. The NKT and SSC maintain Dorge Shugden is a Buddha.

In the last few weeks, the

SSC has launched a letter-writing campaign to the Home Secretary asking for the Dalai Lama's visit to be stopped; draft letters have been distributed by NKT trained teachers to their students, claiming that his visit will "do nothing other than harm" and accusing him of "persecuting his own people."

The Office of Tibet is understood to be deeply alarmed by the high-profile, well-funded campaign which lists branches in NKT affiliated centres throughout the world on its Internet website.

The concern among British supporters of Tibet is that the SSC campaign will play di-

rectly into Chinese hands. As a Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Dalai Lama has had enormous success in raising the profile of the cause of a free Tibet — the country has been occupied by the Chinese since 1950. The Chinese see the undermining of his reputation as a world religious leader as an effective way to weaken support for Tibet.

The UK's Tibet Society, one of the hosts for the Dalai Lama's visit along with 27 UK Buddhist organisations, accuses the SSC of being "sectarian" and of "going directly against the basic premise of Buddhism, which is compassion and benefit of others."

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Clarke kills tax cut hopes

Larry Elliott
and Michael White

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke will snuff out Conservative hopes of big pre-election tax cuts with a blunt warning to the public spending Cabinet this month that a structural shortfall in Britain's tax revenues rules out a Budget giveaway.

Senior Treasury sources believe the persistently poor state of the Government's finances means there is no case for a voter-friendly Budget package and that fiscal policy should ideally be tightened rather than loosened.

In a message that is certain to alarm Conservative right-wingers, the Treasury admits privately that its old models for calculating tax receipts have "gone wrong" following the 50 per cent overshoot in public borrowing last year.

"There is a big structural revenue gap," one senior source said, admitting that the Treasury could find no simple explanation for the loss of £10 billion in expected tax receipts in the 1995/6 financial year.

Opinions conveyed by officials include the growth of the black economy following the decision to increase the VAT rate to 17.5 per cent in the early 1990s, and the ability of multinational companies to shift tax liabilities around the world.

The Treasury also acknowledges that changes in the labour market may have had an impact. It accepts that it may have overestimated the extent of so-called wage drift — the gap between top-up payments and basic pay settlements.

Mr Clarke will use the Treasury's gloom over the public finances as a weapon in the opening phases of what promises to be a tough pre-election spending round. He is determined that spending next year should hit the target of £28.5 billion, and preferably be somewhat lower.

Senior Treasury sources are concerned at the mounting

cost of the interest that has to be paid to service public borrowing and disappointed at the failure of the Private Finance Initiative to plug the gaps in the Government's capital spending programme.

Despite the pressure to spend more and tax less, the Chancellor is arguing that the Government's main task is to restore the credibility for economic management lost on Black Wednesday and never regained.

Before next week's Commons summer debate on the economy, Mr Clarke is expected to scale down his growth projections from 3 to 2.5 per cent and increase the PSBR from £22.5 billion to around £28 billion.

However, he will also argue that the "growth pause" in the economy is coming to an end, and will use yesterday's announcement of the 1,000-job Taiwanese investment in Lancashire as evidence that activity will pick up this year.

The prospect that Mr Clarke will refuse to slash spending and taxes in his November Budget — unless John Major opts reluctantly for an early election — will lay him open to the accusation that, like Labour's Roy Jenkins in 1970, he threw away the only chance of snatching victory at the polls.

Shadow chancellor Gordon Brown's cautious refusal in the new Labour policy statement to make tax pledges ahead of Mr Clarke's budget stems from his wariness of falling VAT and other tax revenues — which Mr Clarke is seeking to buttress with the sales of nuclear power and Ministry of Defence homes worth £1.5 billion.

Mr Brown said last night: "The Chancellor has already admitted that he made a mistake in last year's Budget. There is a hole in the public finances. He now needs to tell us how large the hole is, why it has occurred and what action he proposes to rectify the problem."

Clarke labels Brown's plans incompetent, page 4
Statement on windfall tax, and Notebook, page 22



The scene yesterday in Electric Avenue, Brixton, where Nelson Mandela will end his state visit next Friday after a week of pomp and ceremony

PHOTOGRAPH MARTIN GOODMAN

Mandela bridges divide between royalty and Railton Road

Shantini Nicol

WELL fed on Her Majesty's breakfast, Nelson Mandela will say farewell to the Queen next Friday and join Prince Charles for a trip across the Thames. They will travel from Buckingham Palace to Brixton, shifting from the heart of the establishment to the soul of Black Britain.

From Railton Road and across Coldharbour Lane

the crowd will mass on Brixton Station Road waiting for a glimpse of the man who changed the world.

Stalls will dot the sidewalk and the wares the public will be buying, they say, are the determination, the character and the strength of the South African leader.

"He's very dignified," said Michelle Maxon, heading home along the Brixton Road yesterday. "He's a very good role model."

Mandela arrives on Monday for the first state visit by a South African president. The Queen, still ennobled by her visit to the Rainbow Nation 18 months ago, has organised a week-long shindig.

But once the salutes have blasted from the Tower of London and Green Park, and the politicians, businessmen and academics have feted him, then Mandela will head south.

As people in Brixton rushed home from work yesterday, the imminent arrival of Nelson Mandela caused little stir. Most smiled self-consciously with regret at their own indifference.

Some were effusive. "South Africa is very lucky to have a man who has suffered for them and now can unify them," said Segun Ogunbunmi, a businessman. "A man who had been locked up for so long and still said 'Let's forget our differences', a man for

whom suffering did not deter his commitment."

Others were not. "I wouldn't break my neck to see him," said Frank Henry, a 44-year-old. "He's a token leader whose policies now are completely different from when he came out of prison. It's a bit like the Labour Party."

Some thought the visit was encouraging. "What he says to me is that if you feel your point is right then keep going to the bitter end," said Clive Gordon, aged 33.

One thing is for certain: when the real action starts outside Brixton Recreation Centre, Mandela will step out into a flood of joy and wash in the honour that he inspires among his supporters. After an hour, he will head to South Africa's problems as the people of Brixton head home towards theirs.

Anthony Sampson, Outlook, page 15

Holiday chaos looms as BA pilots threaten indefinite strike

Seamus Milne
Labour Editor

ALL British Airways planes could be grounded indefinitely from July 15 after the pilots' union said yesterday that it would strike unless the company shifted its position in a dispute over flight crew pay.

"An all-out unlimited stop-

page — common in the 1970s, but virtually unheard of today — would be likely to ground the bulk of BA's 525 daily flights, bringing chaos to Britain's airports at the height of the holiday season.

Announcing the strike date, Chris Darke, general secretary of the British Airline Pilots' Association, said he was willing to restart negotiations to avoid such a disruptive

walkout, but it appeared that BA was "content for the strike to go ahead."

The only contact he had had from BA since the announcement of the 90 per cent pilots' strike vote on Wednesday had been two "short and frankly silly" letters asking for clarification where none was needed, he said. He was trying to give BA a little more time, but could not wait forever.

But BA said last night that it had made a revised offer of self-funding — which had not been put to the pilots and which was unknown to them when they took their decision to back a strike. "The ballot was therefore out of date," said a spokesman.

This new offer was constructed after listening to our pilots. We are ready to talk. Turn to page 3, column 4.

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In rehearsal for tonight's Wembley concert, the three tenors Luciano Pavarotti (top), Plácido Domingo (left) and José Carreras

Three tenors for the price of 1½

Alex Bellis
THE recent British affliction of swaths of empty seats at its proudest sporting arenas looks set to continue tonight for the Three Tenors concert at Wembley stadium.



often best known from TV adverts and theme tunes. Tickets range from £35 to £350 and have already brought in £7 million to the box office. The German promoter, Mattheus Hoffmann, is now offering two £210 seats for the price of one.



man for Hoffmann Concerts said last night: "Tickets remain unsold in covered and uncovered areas. The forecast is good and people should not worry. The staging will be beautiful and the singers are in very good mood. I saw the concert in Tokyo last Saturday and some people were so moved that they came out crying."

erecting towering pseudo-Greek pillars on the 180-foot wide stage. The pillars light up from inside and are in front of a backcloth lit to simulate the night sky.

Security monster threatens peace, warn critics

Arafat's tentacles grip Palestinians

David Hirsh in Gaza

YASSER ARAFAT, the Palestinian leader, is building a police and security force so large and costly it will become a serious danger to himself and to the peace process. It is supposed to protect, say Western diplomats, aid workers and even some of his senior officials.

on criminal charges — subsequently dropped under international pressure — of possessing drugs and breaking a policeman's arm in jail. According to his critics, Mr Arafat has used the pretext of "fighting terrorism" to build an apparatus which, in the end, he is likely to use in defence of himself and a small elite, discredited by their close collaboration with the Israelis, their oppression of their own people, their corruption and mismanagement.

cal and social power. That prevents them from coalescing into a rival power centre to himself. They have as many as 17 prisons in Gaza alone. The minister of justice has privately admitted he does not know which agency holds which prisoners, and where. One of their key functions is to raise money, by illegal means, for themselves and their boss, who uses secret patronage as a vital instrument of control. They have paralled out the whole of Gaza's desperately flagging economic life among themselves for extortion.

Nursery bid by Group 4

John Carroll Education Editor

FOUR-year-olds may not be quite as unruly as they are sometimes cracked up to be these days, but it could be a sign of the times that arrangements for ensuring the quality of their education may soon be put in the hands of a security company which made its name for tackling bank robbers.

have a place at a nursery, playgroup or other form of pre-school education. But he acknowledged that subsidiaries of the two security services companies are now in the running for a contract to administer the inspection of pre-school teachers and premises.

ment's nursery vouchers are being piloted, but the aim is to cover the whole country by March 1998. Ofsted said that Group 4 and Securicor were eligible to bid "because they know about contracts, not because they know about nurseries."

Security alert on march

Orangemen ruling goes to the wire as riot-police are drafted in

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

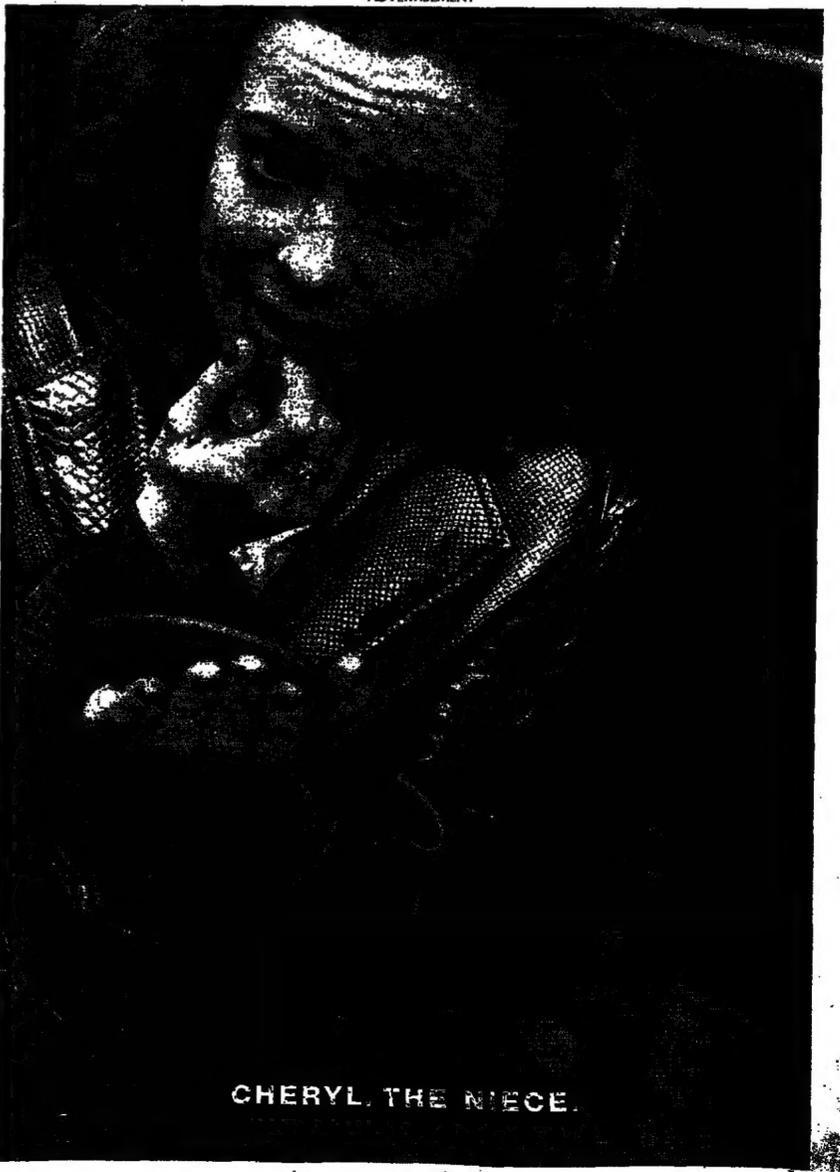
A MASSIVE security operation swung into action in Northern Ireland last night to prevent a repetition of last summer's serious unrest during a Protestant church parade through a Catholic area of the Mid-Ulster town of Portadown.

Others fear that a violent backlash would play into the IRA's hands, giving them the excuse to restart their campaign of violence in Ulster. Last July a three-day stand-off between thousands of protesters and riot police led to serious disturbances in staunchly loyalist Portadown and scattered incidents throughout Northern Ireland, including the blockade of the Port of Larne, Ireland's busiest harbour.

RUC would take. His main options are to force the parade through or to forcibly reroute it away from the disputed stretch of road. Some sources have indicated that the security forces are prepared for up to a week's confrontation.

Pilots set for indefinite pay strike
continued from page 1 without pre-conditions." Failing a negotiated agreement, there is a strong possibility that BA will try to halt the stoppage through the courts.

The British anti-ANC lobby has had negligible influence inside South Africa. But its impact may be more pernicious — discouraging the investment which is one of Mandela's highest priorities.
Anthony Sampson reviews the president's visit
Outlook page 15



Siege of Gloucester matched by battle of Dumfries as leaders hit the road after Labour's Road to Manifesto launch

Blair: the fast track to converting Tories



Blair and Prescott with switchers at the front, then Labour supporters, and reporters at the back PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER JONES

Switchers like sound of New Labour policies

Sarah Boseley

IT'S FRIDAY, it's 3.50, it's Gloucester — then by Jove that must be Tony Blair. But if the ancient city in the west had blinked, it would have missed him. New Labour came, saw and conquered with the speed of the Super Shuttle (across France, of course) or a message flying through the Internet.

rehearsed double act of Prescott and Blair. "He's the striker and I'm the sweeper," explained Prescott. It was a tripartite audience. Seated closest were 40 or 50 "switchers" — likely defectors from other parties. Behind them were local Labour Party members. The press had standing room at the back.

ried the switchers. Better help (especially through technology) for job-seekers, enthused Blair, a society where people get on without having to step over bodies, but let's be honest — government can't cure all the problems of the housing market. Another three questions, then another three — "No," said Blair, "I'll take four even though I'm being signalled from the back." National identity cards, the NHS, tax relief for small companies and democracy. He was fluid, persuasive, articulate and suddenly gone.

was heading more carefully in the same direction. "I have always been an uncomfortable Tory in the past," he said. "I feel a lot more comfortable with the Labour Party as it is at the moment." There had been a convergence of Tory and Labour thinking, he believed. "I don't think I'm untypical of my situation."

Major: 'Insulting' Scots parliament will deter jobs

Prime Minister brings good news on investment for first-ever meeting with Grand Committee

Friend Clouston

THE Prime Minister yesterday renewed his assault on Labour's plan for Scottish devolution, warning it would produce an "insulting" Edinburgh parliament and lead to economic decline.

failure to listen to Scottish demands for change. He also refused repeated Labour requests to say how the Tories would respond to a double Yes vote in Labour's projected devolution referendum.

Mr Major set the £40 million investment by Lite-on Technology in the context of a Scottish economy which had prospered through its involvement in the UK. Overseas entrepreneurs, he argued, were attracted by a political unit which had the lowest tax and inflation rates for 50 years, and the lowest mortgages for 30.

would contend that the Scottish parliament is a positive attraction. Jim Wallace, leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, pointed out that regional autonomy had been no barrier to companies like British Steel investing in Spain.

ferred voting system for the Scottish parliament, whereby 56 of the 129 MSPs will be nominated from party lists. These "placemen" he warned, would have the deciding say if the elected representatives were divided on any issue.

Mr Robertson told the committee, in which the 10 Tory MPs were outnumbered nearly 5-1, that Scots resented being informed by the Prime Minister that their interest in "modern" control over their lives was "teenage madness".

Minister that if he continued to "dismiss and rebuff" Scottish complaints, "he endangers the unity of the country".

servants, 5,000 quango members and \$14 billion funds. Alex Salmond of the Scottish National Party said sovereignty had permitted the Irish to have a 10 per cent corporate tax rate, which last year had helped attract 114 inward development projects to Scotland's 80.



John Major in Dumfries before addressing the Grand Committee PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

Clarke labels Brown's plans 'incompetent'

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, last night insisted that Tory criticisms of Labour's tax-and-spending plans are entirely justified, and prove just how "incompetent" are Gordon Brown's claims to fiscal rectitude.

Clarke claims to be at least 25 "uncoated spending pledges" above the five identified as trail-blazers by Tony Blair. Some members of Labour's National Executive Committee this week hoped to highlight up to 100 such pledges — until warned off by the leadership.

target its attack, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, William Waldegrave, complained that the only precise figure in Labour's new programme was the price of its policy statement — £10. "It is impossible to parody... this brand of all things to all men policy-making contains and encourages huge dangers," he told a City audience.

The Chancellor also issued a renewed attack on this week's pledge to impose a windfall tax on the privatised utilities — as Lady Thatcher did on bank profits in 1981 — and the proposed phasing out of the assisted places scheme for children going to private schools.

Both sides cite data to support their claims, with Mr Clarke arguing that Labour would have to set aside money to pay for the education of pupils who would otherwise have gone private on the assisted scheme. That would save \$57 million a year at the most, Mr Clarke said, accusing Labour of "creative accounting".

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July 1996



Captain Oleg Vandenko at North Shields, with his once proud Tovarisch, and (right) in his oak panelled cabin on the ship. What began as a charitable venture by a group of Geordies to help an old captain has become a nightmare PHOTOGRAPHS: TED DITCHBURN

Former pride of Soviet navy in cash doldrums on the Tyne

Peter Hetherington
on the year-long
plight of the
Ukrainian barque
Tovarisch, held at
North Shields after
failing a series of
safety inspections

WHEN Captain Oleg Vandenko's magnificent tall ship limped into the Tyne, he dreamt of another golden age of sail after badly needed repairs in dry dock. But a year later, the three-masted training barque Tovarisch, once the pride of the Soviet navy and countless international races, lies moored

at North Shields under detention by the Marine Safety Agency after failing a string of safety inspections. What began as a charitable venture by a group of Geordies to help out an old captain in distress — and bail out his ship's near-bankrupt owners, the Ukrainian government — has become a nightmare for him and his

fast-depleting crew, now down to four. The five get no wages from the education ministry in Kiev, and depend on support groups and Tyneside charities for food and generator fuel. Captain Vandenko, 63 and ailing from diabetes and a heart condition, thinks he is being made a scapegoat and fears arrest if he returns to

his home in the Black Sea port of Kherson. "I am very angry," he laments in his oak-paneled cabin adorned with Newcastle United memorabilia. "For a long time we have had no money from our government but the working people from Tyneside come here and help us, old seamen as well. Beautiful people. Very friendly."

Yesterday, on the first anniversary of the detention order, new attempts were being made to remove the Tovarisch, which had a crew of 45 and 100 naval trainees. Built in Hamburg in 1933, the 1,000-tonne ship was scuttled by the German navy in the Baltic in 1945, then raised in 1947 by the Soviets and rebuilt. Teesside Development Cor-

poration, a government agency, now wants to tow it 30 miles to Middlesbrough, to take pride of place in a new tall ships centre. Up to £400,000 is on offer to begin repair work, provided it passes a safety examination commissioned by the Corporation, and agreement can be reached with the Ukrainian government. However, opinions about the vessel's seaworthiness vary. The Marine Safety Agency says while servicing for lifeboats and rescue boats is overdue, her decks are "washed by corrosion in many places". "But the engine is not good, either," volunteers the 35-

year-old radio operator, Victor Tabela. "There are other problems, too. It is not good." The Tovarisch began an association with Tyneside during a tall ships race, from Newcastle, three years ago. A charity group and local teenagers sailed on the first leg, from the Tyne to Bergen in Norway, then asked the captain to return with the promise of tens of thousands of pounds for renovation. But when the ship entered dry dock last year, £2 million of necessary repairs were identified — and as no one has been able to find the cash, the Tovarisch remains tied up on the Tyne.

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Improved detection reveals £60m local government fraud

James Melkie
Community Affairs Editor

THE amount of fraud detected in local government has nearly doubled in two years to between £60 million and £70 million a year, according to figures to be published by the Audit Commission. Illegal claims for housing benefit and student grants, distributed by councils but mainly paid by the Government, account for most of the money which is increasingly being siphoned away by organised gangs. More than 150,000 cases of fraud are thought to have been detected during the 1995-96 municipal year, compared with 83,000 cases involving £36 million in 1993-94 and 112,000 cases involving £46 million in 1994-95. The commission, which is

still analysing the figures, believes better detection methods — including computer checks — and more co-operation between local authorities, the police and other public bodies account for some of the increase but it does not know "how much of the iceberg" remains uncovered. The figures pale beside some estimates of housing benefit fraud, which the Commons social services select committee has said may total £3 billion a year. The commission says local government is more "sinned against than sinning" with relative few cases involving deliberate wrongdoing by staff. It also argues that the money represents a small proportion of the £44 billion spent by local authorities, the £10 billion housing benefit bill and the £2.8 billion student support bill.

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6 WORLD NEWS

Report links Zedillo to kickback

Phil Ganson in Mexico City

MEXICO has threatened unspecified legal action against the New York Times over an article in yesterday's edition which implicates President Ernesto Zedillo in a questionable government payment to a businessman in 1989.

At the time, Mr Zedillo was budget secretary in the government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The \$7 million (£4.5 million) payment was made to Maseca, a company owned by Roberto González Barrera — the self-styled "torilla king" of Mexico.

According to Forbes magazine, Mr González ranks number 11 on the list of Mexican billionaires, with \$1.1 billion. Most of his wealth was accumulated under the government of his close friend Carlos Salinas, whose brother Raúl is in jail awaiting trial on charges of murder and "illicit enrichment".

In 1989, Raúl Salinas was the planning director of Conasupo, the state agency charged with distributing goods to the poor at subsidised prices.

Conasupo gave the \$7 million to Maseca in compensation for delays in paying subsidies to the company. However, the New York Times says lower-ranking officials had advised the government that the payment was "unjustified and probably illegal".

The newspaper bases the claim on documents provided by an independent congressman, Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, a former close aide to Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the Party of the Democratic Revolution

(PRD). Mr Aguilar, a member of the multi-party congressional commission investigating Conasupo, is not accusing the president of having benefited personally from the transaction. Influence-peddling within the government, he told the newspaper, was "so widespread there didn't need to be any personal benefit". However, he does argue that Mr Zedillo's decision was crucial in circumventing opposition within the government.

In a communique issued late on Thursday, the Mexican government said the article contained "slanderous insinuations". It accused the correspondent, Anthony DePalma, of refusing to take into account information offered by the president's office "even before seeing it", and suggested: "Perhaps the aim of the article and the motivation of [Mr DePalma's] informant was not that of informing public opinion."

Nancy Nielsen, a New York Times spokeswoman, said the paper stood by its story, which she said was "thoroughly and accurately reported. It speaks for itself." Like many of his predecessors, President Zedillo has committed himself to eradicating government corruption.

Mr González Barrera is the latest in a series of businessmen to be publicly accused of benefiting from links with Raúl Salinas.

Another is Ricardo Salinas Pliego (no relation), the owner of Mexico's second-largest television company, TV Azteca. Mr Salinas Pliego this week admitted receiving a \$29 million loan from Raúl Salinas at around the time of his successful bid for the privatised television concession.



Faceless in the crowd... Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos is besieged by fans at a forum in San Cristobal, Mexico, to air the rebels' grievances. PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW WINNING

Barefaced cheek of Bogotá's eccentric mayor

Red cards for drivers and Marcel Marceau-style cops are just two of Citizen Mockus's ideas, Mary Matheson in Bogotá writes

NELSON Barreras, aged eight, enters a booth, draws his uncle's face on a balloon and squeezes until it bursts. He sticks a wish on a "tree of desires", is given a symbolic "vaccination" — a drop of water in the mouth — and is sent on his way.

This is a "vaccination against violence" day, intended as a form of therapy for abused children in Bogotá, capital of Colombia and the murder capital of Latin America. About 40,000 people have had the anti-violence vaccination in the past four months. This is not the only odd thing about Bogotá. Careless motorists may find

a football-style red card waved in their face, rather than the traditional torrent of abuse and horn-honking. And jaywalkers are liable to be followed down the street by white-faced mime artists imitating their every move — the idea being that they will be embarrassed into mending their ways.

These are just some of the unconventional schemes of Antanas Mockus, Bogotá's eccentric mayor. Simply on appearances, Mr Mockus, aged 44, is different from most Colombian politicians in their Gucci shoes and Pierre Cardin suits. He rarely wears a tie and bears a passing resemblance to Abraham Lincoln, with a

bowl haircut and chinstrap beard. It is his distinctiveness which won him 70 per cent of Bogotá's votes in 1994. He is part of Latin America's current vogue for "anti-politicians", independent of the corrupt and inefficient traditional parties, and is often likened to President Alberto Fujimori of Peru.

Both entered politics from the academic world, and are the sons of immigrants. Mr Mockus's parents were from Lithuania. He gained notoriety in Colombia two years ago when he showed his bare bottom to a heckling audience of university students. "It was a sign in a war of signs," he said.

"Maybe if I'd had a whistle, I would have whistled. He now wears a whistle around his neck, just in case.

Since taking office, Mr Mockus has continued to entertain Bogotá's. In January he got married in the lions' cage of a circus tent, and he and his bride left for the wedding reception on an elephant.

His policies, such as the vaccination against violence, are as unorthodox as the man himself. Unconvinced by traditional methods for tackling the problems in this anarchic city of 7 million, he is trying to change public behaviour and create a "citizen's culture".

Hence the red cards which he introduced to short-circuit road rage, an all too common complaint in a city where a red light is usually looked upon less as a stop sign than as a challenge.

"The crucial point of a citizen's culture is learning to correct others without mistreating them, or generating aggression," said Mayor Mockus.

Mistreating and generating aggression is generally thought to be the stock-in-trade of the city's police, a byword for corruption and brutality.

Now an army of teenage police trainees, with umbrellas and faces painted like mime artists, roams the city during the rush hour trying to control traffic and pedestrians.

A pedestrian crossing the road at the wrong place will be chased by a "mime artist" who will shadow his every move. "We have found that when people know the rules and are sensitised by art or creative forms, they are more likely to

accept change," Mr Mockus said.

Although he is criticised for failing to address basic public service problems, he retains the support of 85 per cent of Bogotá's. And with Colombia's traditional politicians discredited by a drug-funding scandal, many observers are tipping him for the presidency in 1998.

Police yesterday blamed leftwing rebels for a bomb blast in Bogotá which killed a night watchman and two street children. The bomb exploded in the central Teusaquillo district of the city on Thursday night.

The explosion came within hours of a police announcement of the arrest in Bogotá of a leftwing National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla, said to be the leader of rebel commandos operating in the capital.

Mexican synonyms list leads to complaints of 'racist' software

Phil Ganson in Mexico City

A LIST of suggested synonyms for "Mexican" included in the Spanish-language version of the Microsoft Word 6 word-processing programme has led to complaints of "racism". "Aztec" is a word often substituted for "Mexican" in official discourses. But just a mouse-click away are such terms as "vulgar",

"whining" and "ridiculous".

How about "Indian" — a term still used for the indigenous tribes of the Mexican population? According to Microsoft, "savage", "primitive" and even "cannibal" might apply.

Adriana Luna Parra, an opposition MP, said the software constituted "an attack on our country, on the sovereignty of our nation".

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Recovered memory evidence dealt blow as father is released

Ian Katz in New York

THE credibility of so-called recovered memory evidence was dealt a serious blow this week when Californian prosecutors announced they would not attempt to retry a man for the 1989 murder of an eight-year-old girl.

George Franklin Senior, aged 57, was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in 1990 after his daughter, Eileen Franklin-Lipsker, then aged 29, testified that she had suddenly remembered him molesting and killing her friend Susan Nason 20 years earlier. The reliability of such recollections, supposedly

retrieved after years of repression, has been the subject of controversy. An appeal court last year threw out Mr Franklin's conviction on the grounds that Ms Franklin-Lipsker and her sister Janice Franklin were hypnotised before they gave evidence, a practice forbidden under Californian law.

But prosecutors refused to release Mr Franklin saying they would seek a retrial. On Tuesday, however, Mr Franklin was freed after the San Mateo County District Attorney, Jim Fox, said prosecutors remained convinced of his guilt but did not believe they could "meet our burden in a jury trial".

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Crowning glories... The former king, Baudouin (left), was said to favour his niece Astrid (centre) for the succession, but his sudden death left Albert (right) monarch

Belgian heir says he's fit to be king

Stephen Bates in Brussels

AS IF to prove that Britain's monarchy is not the only troubled throne of Europe, the heir to the Belgian crown, Prince Philippe, broke royal protocol yesterday with a remarkably open assertion of his determination to become king of Belgium.

Since the 86-year-old bachelor is the oldest son of the present king, Albert II, this statement of what seemed obvious has created speculation about behind-the-scenes plotting to bypass the succession in one of Europe's most solid, not to say stolid, dynasties.

The prince's frank but apparently off-the-record discussions with journalists from Belgium's French and Flemish language newspapers follows years of gossip that he might be passed over in favour of his younger sister Astrid.

One of the commonplaces of Belgian life is that Philippe may not be up to the job that, in the words of his uncle Baudouin, the former king, he is "not ready yet".

One constitutional historian said yesterday: "There is a permanent feeling that the boy is weak. His sister would be a potential novelty as Belgium has never been ruled by a queen and she is thought stronger intellectually."

The rumours are that Philippe is not bright enough, that he does not have a strong enough personality, and that he is not married and so unlikely on current form to produce an heir.

Astrid, once spoken of as a possible bride for Prince

Powers behind the throne

ONLY one royal family — the Saxe-Coburg-Gothas of Germany — has reigned in Belgium since it gained its independence 165 years ago.

Leopold I, Queen Victoria's uncle, was the country's first monarch. He was one of several candidates approached and had already turned down the crown of Greece.

The Belgian monarchy has possibly the strongest constitutional powers in Europe with a say, though no veto, over government appointments and legislation.

In 1990, King Baudouin objected so strongly to legislation allowing abortion that he abdicated for 96 hours — he was said to be "unable to reign" — while the legislation was formally approved in his place by the government.

Charles, is now married to a Hapsburg and has four young children, including two sons.

With the sort of discretion rarely seen in the royally-obsessed British press, Belgian papers have only hinted at what might be Philippe's problem.

Le Soir, the French language daily, yesterday spoke of "le petit prince" living a monastic and secluded life within the golden-paneled rooms of the royal palace. The Flemish paper Het Nieuwsblad more bluntly stated that, when the time came, Philippe

would have to be ready on an intellectual and family basis to take over the crown.

But both papers reported favourably on the prince's apparent new dynamism. Nieuwsblad said that "even the camera did not bother him" during the meeting.

In his discussions with the journalists, the prince made it clear that he was keen to follow in his father's footsteps and that he was undertaking more strenuous activities. He was pictured helping to paddle a dinghy with a group of youngsters and it was stressed that he was leading trade delegations to the Far East and Latin America.

Speculation about the prince's future has been rife since the Belgian constitution was changed five years ago to allow a woman to succeed to the throne. The then Belgian monarch, King Baudouin — a much-loved, committed Roman Catholic, but childless — was thought to favour his devout niece, Astrid.

It was suggested that the change would allow the crown to pass to a new generation, avoiding Baudouin's younger brother Albert and his two apparently unsuitable sons, Philippe and Laurent.

But Baudouin died suddenly in 1993 and the prime minister, Jean-Luc Dehaene, moved swiftly to prevent a constitutional crisis by persuading Albert — only four years younger than the old king — to take his place.

One Belgian journalist said hopefully of yesterday's meeting: "It is very unusual for a prince to give an interview. This may be a cautious first step towards openness."



Prince among men... Philippe undergoing military training at the age of 19. A common view in Belgium, and one shared by his uncle, Baudouin, is that he is not ready to be king

Sarajevo airport clear and almost ready for take-off

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO lost one of its great wartime monuments this week when the wreckage of a crashed United Nations transport plane was dragged off the tarmac at the city's airport to make way for commercial flights.

The plane, an Ilyushin 76 chartered from Belarus, skidded into a minefield as it landed on an icy runway in December 1994. The crew of 11 was saved but the airliner could not be removed until now for fear of detonating mines or drawing sniper fire from nearby Bosnian Serb positions.

The Ilyushin, with its nose in the mud and its tail in the air, became a familiar landmark. Planes bringing supplies into the besieged Bosnian capital had to taxi gingerly around it, and its tilting fuselage marked the gateway to the city for humanitarian aid convoys arriving along the UN road corridor across the airfield.

For many — and in many different ways — it provided a metaphor for the UN's involvement in Bosnia, reflecting a combination of well-intentioned courage with self-serving buffoonery.

General Sir Michael Rose, then the British commander of the UN Protection Force (Unprofor), suggested turning the plane into a monument to the Sarajevo humanitarian airlift. But it was pointed out that on its ill-fated last flight, the plane had been carrying crates of wine and cognac to restock the French garrison's cellars in time for New Year's Eve. After the crash a few broken bottles of alcohol were found in the cockpit.

"In the worst days before Dayton [the December 1995 peace agreement], when the airlift was stopped, I always thought it was the perfect allegory for the international effort in Bosnia — derailed and stuck in the mud," said Kris Janowski, a spokesman for the UN refugee agency, the UNHCR.

The Ilyushin's removal has a symbolism of its own. Like the removal of the sandbags and earth berms at either end of the main runway, it marks an important step towards the "normalisation" of Sarajevo's airport, which is currently administered by the Nato-led peace implementation force (I-For).

Once I-For has removed the last of the mines from around the runways — probably before the end of this month — the airport will be ready for its first regular civilian flights since the war.

Croatian Airlines and Turkey's Top Air are expected to be first in the queue to establish a scheduled service into Sarajevo.

They will fly in fair weather only, until modern navigation equipment can be installed later this year. The World Bank estimates the cost of refurbishing the airport at £15 million.

Until the repairs are complete, most flights have to be booked through "Maybe Airlines", the self-deprecating title — reflecting the unpredictability of flights in times of fighting or bad weather — was adopted by the Unprofor air traffic managers and maintained by I-For.

Foreign journalists and aid workers may lament the passing of Maybe Airlines and its

unique passport stamp. But Sarajevoans will be glad to see the back of it.

For them, it is a reminder of the siege, a time when only a handful of privileged UN-approved passengers (almost all foreigners) could fly in and out of the city.

Bosnians were reduced to creeping under the airport along a mud-filled 800-yard tunnel. A second, much larger tunnel had just been excavated when the war ended. Both are now being rattled to prevent subsidence under the runways.

The Ilyushin can meanwhile be seen skidding on the edge of the airfield, while insurance companies squabble over its ownership. It is not believed to be beyond repair, and there is talk of turning it into one of Sarajevo's more unusual nightclubs. But as time goes by and the Unprofor era recedes, it is increasingly likely to find itself consigned to the scrapheap of history.

Lebed gets tough on key post

David Hearst in Moscow

GENERAL Alexander Lebed, Russia's new and increasingly belligerent national security adviser who helped Boris Yeltsin win this week's presidential election, has threatened to quit if he does not get his way on the choice of defence minister.

He made this threat by refusing to consider anyone for the post other than his candidate, General Igor Rodionov, currently head of the Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

Gen Lebed, who campaigned on a ticket of cleaning up the army and installing law and order in the

country said: "If we want reform in the army — it's Rodionov. If we want stagnation, then it is someone else."

Gen Lebed said he faced a "real threat" from those around the president who wanted to limit his powers in the wake of Mr Yeltsin's commanding win over the communists. This was achieved by the support of Gen Lebed and many of his voters after the first round of voting.

"If everything remains as it is, the country will simply explode. I am deeply convinced that I will get the necessary powers. I will be able to create a system which starts to restore elementary order in Moscow and in the country," he said.

The conflict between Gen Lebed and Viktor Chirko-

myrdin, the prime minister — who has made no secret of his opposition to the general's extraordinary demands — has now come out into the open.

Mr Yeltsin, who is physically weary after the long election battle, desperately needs a period of stability. Yevgeny Yasin, the economics minister, has warned of a federal budget crisis in the autumn.

Gen Lebed, secretary of the Security Council, a body with only advisory powers, is demanding executive control of the forces ministries and the economy. He wants to control the purse strings of the armed forces and the military industrial complex.

Anatoly Chubais, the for-

mer privatisation supremo, said yesterday it would be the "gravest error" if the Security Council was given any serious economic functions.

Alexander Lebed is wonderful at making decisive declarations. But as far as the profundity and balance of those declarations are concerned, they suffer from certain defects," he said.

The turbulence created by Gen Lebed spilled over into the Duma (parliament) where Pavel Grachev, the former defence minister, was accused of corruption by Lieutenant-General Lev Rochlin, chairman of the Duma's defence committee.

Martha Woodcock, Outlook, page 14

Duma clamps down on return of art treasures seized from Nazis

Reuters in Moscow

RUSSIA'S lower house of parliament passed a draft law yesterday severely restricting any possible return of works of art and other valuables seized from the Nazis during the second world war.

The preamble to the draft law said it aimed to lay the legal groundwork for the valuables to be considered partial compensation for damage inflicted on Russia by Germany. Any handovers would be subject to individual laws which would need to be passed in each instance.

Officials from the German embassy in Moscow were not available for comment on the draft. Germany has been pressing for Moscow to give back some of the treasures.

Last year the Pushkin museum in Moscow displayed 63 paintings seized from the Nazis, including pieces by Goya, El Greco and Renoir, saying they represented only a sixth of its spoils of war. The Hermitage museum in St Petersburg unveiled a further 74 paintings by Van Gogh, Gauguin, Degas and other impressionist masters.

In its report on the passage of the draft, Itar-Tass news agency said it would affect relations with many

European countries but especially Germany and Italy.

The draft, which won the support of 802 deputies with none against and just two abstentions, must be approved by the upper house of parliament and signed by President Boris Yeltsin before it becomes law. Mr Yeltsin has given individual treasures back during visits abroad — to the horror of parliamentarians.

Bonn, which has been lobbying Russian politicians to try to block any law which might hamper the return of the war booty, said last year that Mr Yeltsin had promised to find a way to return some of the masterpieces.

Moscow signed a friendship treaty with Germany in 1990, which included an article on the mutual return of works of art, but a Russian-German commission has made little progress.

Russian officials have long taken the view that the works are legitimate compensation for Russia's wartime suffering and the destruction of many of its own art treasures through the German invasion in 1941.

Last year parliament passed a decree forbidding the transfer of any works of art until a law was passed.

Chinese Communist Party breathes sigh of relief

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

THE Chinese Communist Party is celebrating its 75th birthday and quietly breathing a sigh of relief that the Communists lost in Moscow.

China's main television news yesterday gave prominent coverage to Boris Yeltsin's victory over his Communist rival, Gennady Zyuganov, in Russia's presidential election. It reported that President Jiang Zemin, who heads the Chinese Communist Party, and the prime minister, Li Peng, welcomed the result.

Mr Jiang, at present on a trip to Kazakhstan, sent a telegram of congratulations to Mr Yeltsin, formerly reviled in internal Chinese party documents as an apostate who destroyed the Soviet Union and betrayed communism.

"In recent years, Sino-Russian relations have flourished and, thrived, bounding forward each day," said Mr Jiang, a Russian-speaker who trained in Moscow at the Stalin car works.

When the Chinese Communist Party held its first congress in Shanghai in July 1921, an envoy from the Moscow Comintern was on hand to encourage the Chinese chapter of what was then conceived of as an international

movement. Today, however, it is narrow nationalism that defines both the Chinese and Russian parties.

Though full of praise for China's model of economic reform, Mr Zyuganov surrounded himself with advisers who see China as a potential enemy rather than as an ideological comrade. Among them is Stanislav Govorkin, a film maker who frequently accuses China of plundering Russia's natural resources and seeking to colonise Siberia.

The claim that China wants to annex Siberia is a favourite theme of the so-called national patriots who provided support for Russia's post-Soviet Communist Party.

Mr Yeltsin, in contrast, is seen in Beijing as a reliable partner willing to resist the more strident demands of Russian nationalism.

A visit to Beijing and Shanghai by Mr Yeltsin in April was hailed as the start of a "new age" in relations between two countries which, even when normally sharing the same communist faith, have rarely agreed on anything for long.

A foreign ministry statement said yesterday: "China respects the choice of the Russian people and believes that the Sino-Russian strategic partnership oriented toward the 21st century on the basis of equality and mutual trust will be further enhanced."

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WIMBLEDON: THE FINAL WEEKEND

The men's semi-finals

Washington sows seeds of doubt

Richard Williams sees Todd Martin float like a butterfly but his opponent sting like a bee before rain called a halt at two-sets all

THE Centre Court men's semi-finals day. This is a stage on which the likes of Rosewall, Rod, Laver, Emerson, Ashe, Borg and McEnroe struggled with the fates and each other. Do you know who never even got this far at Wimbledon? Pancho Gonzales, that's who. Yesterday we watched Todd Martin and Mal Vil Washington trying to live with the legends.

morning, weather permitting, as an hors-d'oeuvre to the women's final. The last available evidence, from the fourth set, suggested that Washington had established a slight edge. It has been a heck of a match so far, in the sense that here were two professional tennis players, evenly matched, both currently ranked just inside the top 20, doing their very best to win through to the final of the championship and thereby earn a shot at immortality. But, if we are speaking in terms of charisma and excitement, it has to be said that there were times yesterday when we might have been watching the final of a club

tournament in Stoke Poges. The pair certainly had something to prove. Products of the US college tennis system, both men live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, close to the ATP headquarters. Earlier this year they played together in the Davis Cup team that lost to the Czech Republic, answering the call after the bigger names — Sampras, Agassi, Chang, Courier — had withdrawn. They are both thought of as what might be called meat-and-potatoes players: reliable but unlikely to enthral or enchant. Martin had won \$4.1 million (£2.6 million) in his career before these championships, about twice Washington's total winnings.

At the moment they are stuck on the second level. Neither of them has much in the way of identifying characteristics, never mind mannerisms. Sweat away from his eyebrows with the flick of a forefinger is about as far as it goes, and even that must have been borrowed from old videos of the aforementioned Gonzales. But at Wimbledon this week they were presented with a chance to redefine themselves. This was their way to get off the plateau. Martin, the conqueror of Tim Henman on Thursday, had been here before. Two years ago he reached the quarter-finals of the Australian Open, where Martin beat him in straight sets. The very first point of the match provided both a paradox and a deception. Martin, 6ft 6in and 14st, is known for his mighty serve. Yet here he was chasing down the thinnest of net cords from Washington to stroke the ball back into an unreachable space with less power than it would take to disturb a sleeping butterfly.

very good player, now is the time. For Washington, who turned 27 three weeks ago, this was unknown territory. In seven years as a professional he had never before been further than the second round at Wimbledon, and had never made it to a Grand Slam semi-final. Two years ago he reached the quarter-finals of the Australian Open, where Martin beat him in straight sets. The very first point of the match provided both a paradox and a deception. Martin, 6ft 6in and 14st, is known for his mighty serve. Yet here he was chasing down the thinnest of net cords from Washington to stroke the ball back into an unreachable space with less power than it would take to disturb a sleeping butterfly.

was won with a clean ace, giving a more accurate indication of the way the match was about to proceed. Washington, a square-rigged 5ft 11in and 12st 3lb, was hoping to become the first black man to reach the final since the immortal Arthur Ashe. Faced with Martin's powerful serving and surprisingly delicate touch at the net, he was forced to put his trust in the direction and depth of his passing shots on both wings. Martin took the first set, breaking Washington in the second and 12th games, losing his own serve in the ninth to a double fault on the final point. Washington broke Martin in the fifth game of the second set — again with a double fault at 15-40, which might say something about the big man's temperament — and survived a flurry of aces

and several exquisite stop volleys and drop shots to serve out. One break each in the third set prefaced a tiebreak which Martin took with the fourth available set point. But by this time Washington was beginning to direct a series of spitting returns at the feet of the incoming server, mixing them with enough venomous passes to sow uncertainty in his opponent's mind. Even a 33-minute rain break could not disrupt the concentrated effort which brought him the fourth set with relative ease. But then the rain returned, the covers came back on and 4½ hours later the day was abandoned. The fifth set, whenever it takes place, promises a grim struggle. The other semi-final between Richard Krajciok and Jason Stoltenberg has been held over until today.



Navratilova... nervous

Martina lobs on after that twentieth

MARTINA Navratilova moved closer to equalling the record of 20 Wimbledon titles yesterday — but only just. It required the game's greatest lady to conquer the nerves, to maintain the between-games chatter with her occasional partner Jonathan Stark and to come up with a crafty lob return over Marcos Ondruska before a third successive victory and a quarter-final mixed-doubles place was secured.

This piece of well-timed impudence was dredged from the experience of a quarter of a century in top-class tennis and it set up a rally from which Navratilova eventually made the forehand volley that clinched the 7-6, 6-7, 7-5 victory over Ondruska, a South African of Czech parentage, and the Swiss-born Austrian Karin Kschwendt. There is no doubting the desire the 39-year-old has for that twentieth. She was insistent that they should play the final set in damp conditions which were enough to halt play on the Centre and No. 1 Court, discussed continually what type of service returns she should employ, taxed line judges and the umpire about several decisions and blessed 65-year-old partner flamboyantly on the lips when their success had been secured.

"We planned that lob," she said. "We had more opportunities throughout the match but couldn't convert them. I was nervous last year because I'm nervous now. Now I'm nervous this year because I want to win. I've been knocking at the knees because I've not played for such a long time. And it's not like singles — it's more nerve-racking with a partner."

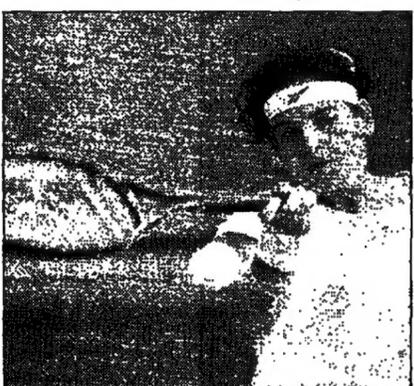
The US Open 10 months ago was the previous time Navratilova competed. However, there was no problem skating wide for the dinked returns or scuttling back for the lob volleys or even taking defensive volleys full bore. Once she even managed a retrieve between her legs. Nevertheless there were one or two over-intense responses, a dropped serve in the last second set and a dazzling smile during the which belied the post-mortem state. After all the outpourings she may just relax her belt today and, if she does, then Billie Jean King's record can be reached.

The women's final

Graf's cold could bring real Spanish comfort

Stephen Bierley on today's clash of old adversaries and playing styles

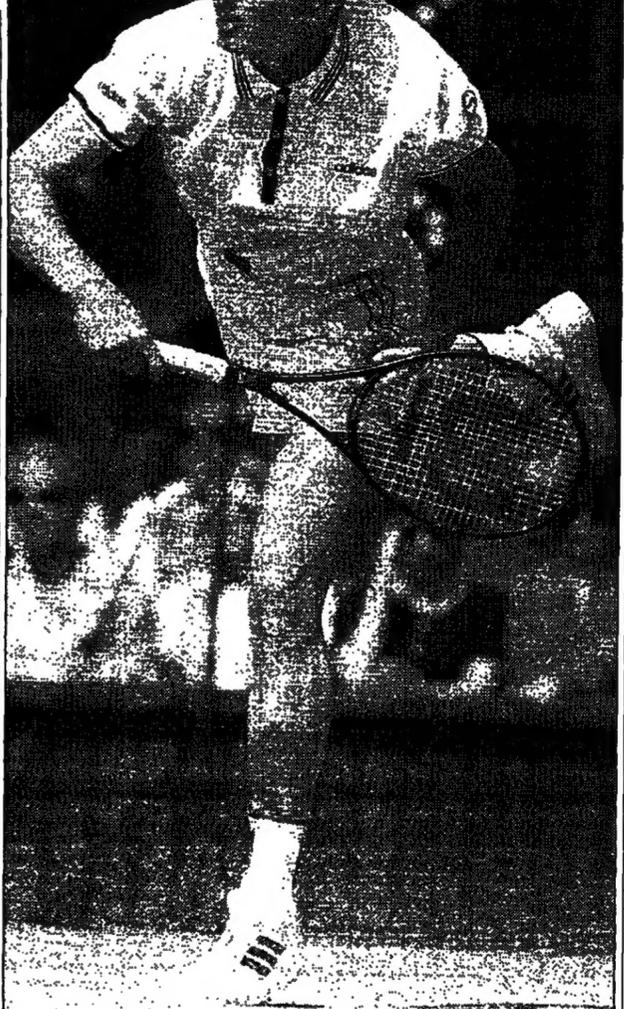
STEFFI GRAF, clearly still smarting from Martina Navratilova's accusation that her pre-Wimbledon knee problem was a good deal less serious than the German had suggested, resolutely refused to talk about injury or illness before today's women's final against Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario. It was obvious the reigning champion was suffering from a heavy cold yesterday after she had completed a 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 semi-final victory over Japan's Kimiko Date on another half-full Centre Court. Sweat beaded Graf's forehead and she clutched a bankie. "Do you not feel well?" she was asked. "After Martina's comment I'm not going to say anything any more," Graf replied. Graf's various injuries over the years have been well documented; set beside these are her 19 Grand Slam singles titles. When you win, nothing hurts. It was impossible not to feel a little sorry for Date. With



Steffi Sanchez... wears down opponents KEVIN LAMARQUE

year's Wimbledon final, have been marvellously fluctuating affairs. The Spanish player's style of play does not suit many. She is quite capable of playing attacking shots, and frequently does, but the core of her game is the ability to run down every shot of her opponents and force them, often through sheer frustration, into errors.

The length of the Spaniard's name does not cause quite so many problems as the length of her rallies but in Paris she was variously rendered on the scoreboards as A Sanchez Vicar and A Sanchez VI ("God preserve us from the other five," remarked one French journalist). Graf's style has never been a problem to the aesthetic sporting eye, although her game is not without its frustrations. In the last set against Date yesterday she followed in one of her immense, power-packed forehands and punched away a telling volley. If she would only do this a little more often, then nobody would touch her on the grass. Graf is also able to unleash a top-spin backhand but rarely allows herself the luxury of this potentially lethal shot. Fraulein Forehand also remains.



Standard service... Steffi Graf concludes her semi-final business yesterday GILL ALLEN

Graf 27, Sanchez Vicario 8

Table with columns: Year, Tournament, Surface, Round, Winner, Score. Lists various tennis tournaments from 1988 to 1996.

Today's final was almost equally inevitable. The men's seeds have been scattered and crushed but Graf and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, like Tennyson's brook, appear to go on for ever. In all they have met 35 times with Graf holding an impressive 27-8 lead. But in Grand Slam events the German's dominance is much less extraordinary, her lead being only 9-4. Remarkably their last 15 meetings have all been in finals, which clearly indicates just how much these two have dominated the women's game over the last three years in the absence of Monica Seles. They are chalk and cheese; Graf, tall and athletic, with a forehand of blistering power; Sanchez Vicario, small and determined, with the tenacity of a Jack Russell. Opposites produce tensions; their two most recent matches, in this year's French Open and last

Results

Men's Singles: P Sampras (US) vs T Martin (US) 7-5, 4-6, 7-6, 6-3 unfinished. Men's Doubles: T A Woodbridge / M Woodlards (Aus) vs B Black / G Cowell (Zim) 6-3, 6-1. Women's Singles: S Graf (Ger) vs M Navratilova (Cz/Sp) 6-2, 2-6, 6-3. Women's Doubles: A Sanchez Vicario (Cz/Sp) vs J Novotna (Cz) 6-3, 6-1. Mixed Doubles: M Navratilova / J Stark (US) vs B Black / G Cowell (Zim) 6-3, 6-1. Men's Over-45: D Newcombe (Aus) vs A Roche (Aus) 6-2, 6-3. Boys' Singles: P Sampras (US) vs T Martin (US) 7-5, 4-6, 7-6, 6-3. Girls' Singles: S Graf (Ger) vs M Navratilova (Cz/Sp) 6-2, 2-6, 6-3. Women's Over-35: S Graf (Ger) vs M Navratilova (Cz/Sp) 6-2, 2-6, 6-3. Women's Over-35 Doubles: A Sanchez Vicario (Cz/Sp) vs J Novotna (Cz) 6-3, 6-1.

Sports betting

Take Surrey price for Steffi in straight sets. Julian Turner. IN A world of uncertainty, thank goodness there are some things you can still rely on. Not the men's Wimbledon semi-finals, of course: it would have taken an accumulator of around 300,000 to 1 to predict the four eventual contenders. After this summer's football, 1996 is looking ever more like a bookies' benefit — which is why it is so reassuring that, weather permitting, Steffi Graf will win her seventh Wimbledon singles final this weekend. Despite her unseemly wobble against Kimiko Date, William Hill rates a straight-sets Graf victory as an even-money chance. So when Surrey Racing offers the same surety at 6-4 you have to jump on, and soon. BOXING: Nigel Benn makes his comeback tonight to challenge Chris Eubank's conqueror, Steve Collins. Benn should still be the class act, but the relentless professionalism Collins showed to

CRICKET

Divided opinion has left the bookies betting on a sticky wicket in the NatWest Trophy, and Surrey prices are available. Surrey (SR) and Cornwall (COR) hold particular opposing views. After taking some lumpy bets SR make Lancashire strong favourites at 4/1 followed by Warwickshire at 11-2, while Cornwall pushes both contenders out to 13-2 with a slip codron of other teams just behind. Comparing the two firms' prices shows opportunities for supporters of Middlesex (7-1) Coral bet 12-1 Surrey (Coral), Surrey (8-1) and Northamptonshire (10-1) and 18-1. Northants are the form one-day team and along with Surrey look fair value.



Long service... Todd Martin against Mal Washington yesterday, with the decisive set delayed until today

Advertisement for Halli trum, Double Tr, and various other services. Includes contact information for Cornwall Race Line and Surrey Race Line.

Racing

Halling to turn up trumps on turf

Softening ground should favour last year's Eclipse winner in repeat bid says Ron Cox

ONLY four runners turned out for the 1985 Coral-Eclipse Stakes, when Febles beat Rainbow Quest...

Halling went on to win the Juddmonte International Stakes at York with the proverbial ton in hand...

Valanour was an intended opponent there until the going changed to soft, and even if he takes his chance today it is highly unlikely that he will be able to show his best form...



Silver lining... Ron Cox (umbrella aloft) greets Wendy Woods after his win on Sheer Danzig in the Hong Kong Jockey Club Trophy

Double Trigger sale misfires

DOUBLE TRIGGER is to race on Epsom after his trainer, Mark Johnston, revealed the five-year-old's proposed sale to the Middle East has fallen through...

Sheer Danzig's 'away win' has his Hong Kong connections singing in the rain

SHEER DANZIG kept the Hong Kong Jockey Club Trophy 'in-house' when he gained a last-gasp, short-lived victory in the \$20,000 handicap at Sandown yesterday...

Haydock with TV form

2.00 Gillingham 4.50 Royal 4.10 Royal Court 4.30 Walsby...

Chepstow

2.30 Mower O'Grady 4.00 Amwell (rb) 4.30 Santala Kalle 5.00 Sam Freedman...

Sandown runners and riders with TV form

Table with columns for race number, runner name, jockey, and TV channel. Includes Channel 4 and Channel 5 listings.

Haydock with TV form

Table with columns for race number, runner name, jockey, and TV channel. Includes Channel 4 and Channel 5 listings.

Chepstow

Table with columns for race number, runner name, jockey, and TV channel. Includes Channel 4 and Channel 5 listings.

Results

Table of race results for Sandown, Haydock, and Warwick, including runner names, jockeys, and finishing positions.

Results

Table of race results for Chepstow, including runner names, jockeys, and finishing positions.

Results

Table of race results for Sandown, Haydock, and Warwick, including runner names, jockeys, and finishing positions.

Results

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Results

Table of race results for Chepstow, including runner names, jockeys, and finishing positions.

Graf closes on one more title, page 8
Halling eyes a second Eclipse, page 9

The Tour heads for the hills, page 10
The gold rush begins at Bislett, page 11

SportsGuardian

WIMBLEDON: TENNIS TAKES ANOTHER RAIN CHECK



Somewhere over the rainbow Centre Court may catch up

Heavy downpours at Wimbledon interfered with another day's play, bringing a premature close to the men's semi-final where MaliVai Washington and Todd Martin had reached the fifth set. The match between Richard Krajicek

and Jason Stoltenberg was held over until today but Steffi Graf found enough clear sky to demolish Kimiko Date. She meets Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in today's women's final. Reports page 13, photograph Tom Jenkins

Anyone for a corporate tennis lunch?



Paul Weaver

WE HAVE surely entered the era of designer sport when a hot ticket to Wimbledon, Wembley Ascot or Lord's is viewed as a fashion accessory. Sport has suddenly become smart. Politicians and pop stars are advised to "follow" a football club. John Major even wrote a sports column to tell us all about Euro 96, a tournament which under his management would probably have ended with a lost ball and a revolt by continental defenders.

stands visible behind him because they were the reserved seats. Next season, too, county cricket matches will start on Wednesdays instead of Thursdays. This is partly to avoid the Sunday League "sandwich game" but also to provide the sponsors, who have no interest in Saturdays, with another option. "It's not good for members or youngsters at school, who both enjoy Saturdays," says Essex's astute secretary Peter Edwards. "Now games could be over before the weekend." Sponsorship has saved many sports and sportsmen but now big events have become places to be seen, while the sport often goes unseen. The problem is that sport's greatest asset, its ability to cross barriers of age, gender, education and income — something politicians now realise — is being eroded. The true supporter is being left in the cold, sometimes literally, as the hot ticket becomes a badge of privilege. There were many of them in their sleeping bags on the pavements outside the All-England Club last week, preparing to queue all night in the rain for the chance of a Centre Court ticket. A few lucky ones got in on Wednesday when Henman was due to play Martin, but by the time the game was played on Thursday they had lost out to the ballot winners and corporate good-timers.

England v India: third Test, second day

England limit the damage

Mike Selvey at Trent Bridge

INDIA, after a successful opening day and just when they should have been steaming merrily along towards a potential match-winning total, ran straight into a Barsegasee yesterday in the form of a more focused and purposeful England attack hell bent on stifling the innings.

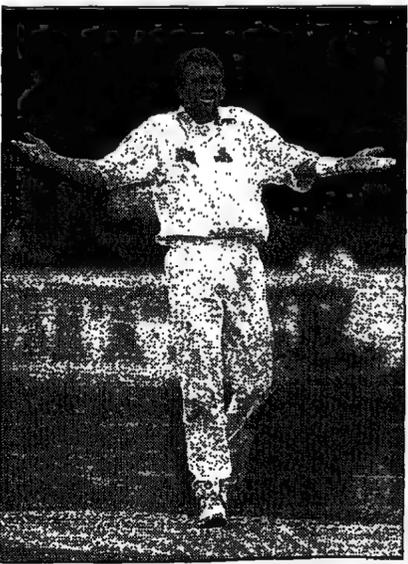
pitch likely to become easier, it ought to have been sufficient to ensure that England save the match and so win the series. Sometimes it is the nastiest medicine that does the most good. On Thursday the England bowlers had taken such a clattering from Sourav Ganguly and Sachin Tendulkar that there was a real possibility of carnage yesterday. So credit must be given to the bowlers, who not only dismissed Ganguly without addition to his overnight 156 but admirably

restricted Tendulkar to 46 runs prior to lunch and then got rid of him after the interval for 177. There followed a torturous half-century from Sanjay Manjrekar, whose 54 took more than 3 1/2 hours, and it was only another composed innings from Rahul Dravid, who was last out for 84 and farmed the tail so successfully he could qualify for a subsidy, that saw India to 521. But the 234 they added yesterday — only 188 of them before tea — used up 77 of the day's quota of overs.

It did, however, leave Mike Atherton and Alec Stewart 11 overs to negotiate before stumps, a testing proposition against Srinath and Prasad, who have consistently been the best bowlers on display during the series. They managed it, reaching 32 — still 290 short of their immediate target of 322 required to avoid following on — but not without alarm. In the third over Atherton edged Srinath low to Dravid's left at third slip, where the fielder failed to cling on. Atherton, who seems to make more than his ration of noughts, had not opened his account at that point and, as he had given Tendulkar a life before he had scored on Thursday, will hope that India show him the same charity today. He finished unscathed with 21. At the other end Stewart had made 10, although he too was close to being dismissed when he got an inside edge to Prasad that flew over the top of his stumps.

David Lloyd, England's coach, admitted of the Atherton let-off: "It went at a nice height for a slip fielder, at just around the knee level. It was definitely a chance. I just hope he can cash in like Tendulkar." If the blustery conditions had partially explained some

ordinary bowling on Thursday, there was no such excuse yesterday and the seamers, worked hard by Atherton and given licence to adopt an attritional approach, responded excellently. Once more it was Chris Lewis, with three for 68, who came out with the best figures. But Alan Mullally bowled with enough pace to hurry good batsmen on a feathered, stuck to his task and emerged with the early wicket of Ganguly and two for 88 in all from 40 plucky overs while Mark Ealham plugged away and was rewarded with two wickets including a notable first in Tendulkar. When play began yesterday England, realistically, would have known that the game was there to be saved now rather than won. Block the flow of runs and urgent frustrated batsmen, seeking to break out, can get themselves out. The first breakthrough of the day, however, came from first-class attacking bowling from Mullally, who bent his back, hit Ganguly a nasty blow on the right hand, and while it was still throbbing, pitched the next ball up and found the edge with Nasser Hussain taking a tumbling catch.



Hard labour... Dominic Cork shows his frustration on a day when England were made to toil

of the day, however, came from first-class attacking bowling from Mullally, who bent his back, hit Ganguly a nasty blow on the right hand, and while it was still throbbing, pitched the next ball up and found the edge with Nasser Hussain taking a tumbling catch. Tendulkar had been unable to find the boundary during the latter part of the 255-run partnership and it was 40 minutes before he managed to cover-drive Mullally, his first four in 32 overs. Cork will swear blind, and could summon the video evidence to support it, that Tendulkar, offering no stroke, should have been given out leg-before when 147.

On the same score another vehement shout by Cork was also turned down, once more by the Sri Lankan umpire K T Francis, and the bowler's evident disgust was followed by booing from the crowd when the giant screen showed a replay. As Francis had made a sensible ruling on a marginal decision, it brought into focus the need for reasonable discretionary use of the facility. With Manjrekar out of touch and entrenched, Tendulkar began to expand and had hit 26 fours in 177 — the pair adding 89 — when he tried to pull Ealham and succeeded only in sending the ball in a gentle parabola from the toe-end of his bat to Patel at mid-on. In years to come Ealham will tell of how he bounced out one of the world's great players. Only he will know how true that was. Tendulkar has made 35 first-class centuries now and none has exceeded his highest Test score of 179. With Tendulkar's dismissal, England seized the initiative and four overs later Azharuddin turned a ball from Lewis off his hip and

Patel, now perched under the helmet at short-leg, take a superb reflex catch. The Indian captain has had a poor summer but this pitch was right up his street. An hour from him and the force could have been right back with India. With his departure went the last trump card.

England
First innings
V. Atherton c Russell b Cork 4
M A Atherton not out 21
A J Stewart not out 10
Doran 10/11 1

Scoreboard

Table with 2 columns: Player, Runs. Includes names like V Atherton, M A Atherton, A J Stewart, Doran, and totals for England and India.

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,698

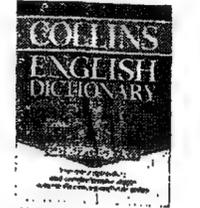
A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,698, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday, Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday, July 15.

Name _____
Address _____

Tick here if you do not wish to receive further information from the Guardian Media Group or other companies screened by us

Collins English Dictionary crossword grid with numbers 1-26.

- Across
1 See 1 down
4 A lot of toil? Shame! (4,4)
9 One's absorbed in article on art of raising capital (6)
10 Sovereign with rot, pole and perch detailed at left perhaps (8)
11 Ignorance assumed with non-smoking characters (4-10)
14, 18 Ignored like Sutherland's "Christ in Glory" once (4,2,8)
16 Here Aschenbach died; so pass the hat round (4)
18 Turn to satellite TV; hackedneyed outfit but revolutionary (10)
21 Policy linking Panama with South Carolina, Rhode Island and Maine, without a doubt (3-11)
23 The end opposite the 1 across (3-11)
24 Michelangelo's angel (6)
25 They fought for the old Trucial State railway (8)
26 The Modern Woman? 'e would agree! (6)
- Down
1, 1ac Show support for string players (4-6)
2 Sacerdotal word from the law-giver's brother (7)
3 An extended farewell from Daventry? (4-4)
5 So Luther was seen, getting in the RC-Establishment hair



- (4-7)
6 Hang on! This is no place for non-swimmers; no point! (6)
7 Transport provided to universal acclamation (7)
8 Almost terminate order to be French; let them keep their distance (9)
12 Self-possessed motorist (5-6)
13 I thought you got it! (5)
15 Young shaver gets to the top (8)
17 Old artistie stoppage of Drury Lane show, no? (3,4)
19 Influence found where Golding sought it at Salisbury (7)
20 "Tampo coat armor" bringing not a word from the family! (6)
22 Span 1 across to 23 (4)

Crossword solution grid with numbers 1-26 and corresponding words.

YOUR ADVANTAGE
Special offer for shareholders. See page 34

"Oasis seem to despise intelligence — Noel once quite proudly said that he's never read a book in his life... The idea of a leading cultural icon being proud of not reading is sad."
Damon Albarn of Blur reckons he's the poet
Outlook page 17

Handwritten signature or mark.

JOHN... climate... SW... SOC... SUN... shi...
D... ..

CNN foreign correspondent Christiane Amanpour made her name grilling Bill Clinton over Bosnia. So why doesn't she like questions about her huge new salary?

The million dollar action woman

Interview by Dina Rabinovitch

SHE MADE her name doing it to Bill Clinton and now she's doing it to me. The world's first million-dollar foreign correspondent is grilling me down the phone. "Do you know, do you have the faintest idea, just how many requests I've had for face-to-face interviews? It's been endless," she says. "And I've said no to every single one."

"There's more. And even if I was about to give an interview — which I'm not — if there is one paper I wouldn't say yes to, it's the Guardian, with that ridiculous story (in last week's news pages) you carried, totally inflating my salary." Well, do the interview, I say. Put the record straight.

"Oh God, oh God, oh God," she says. "No, no, I'm sorry, the answer's no." Like all successful negotiators though — and without wishing to mention the word salary, Christiane Amanpour has just wangled a unique cross-channel deal for herself with a handsome whack attached, so she must have some bargaining skills — Amanpour's "no" always bears the possibility of becoming a "yes". "Right," she says finally. "Tomorrow, 10am." She doesn't need to add "sharp".

So it's the 5am Eurostar to Paris, city where the women still smoke, the men don't wear shorts and where CNN's star reporter comes to recharge her war-torn batteries. Ten to 15 minutes late and running scared that Amanpour will use this as an excuse to cry off, but in fact I get to the CNN bureau before it opens, a good ten minutes before the first arrival, a Moneypeppy-type secretary compliments me with small grey dog who matches the acres of grey carpeting perfectly.

Minutes later, Amanpour breezes in. "You see, you see," she says. "I told you it's all go, constant staff happiness, no time for interviews about me." "Your bank manager wants you to call urgently," says the Moneypeppy type. Not that money's the story here, but 38-year-old Amanpour's just become the highest-paid foreign correspondent in the business — \$2m package, said the Guardian, \$1,500,000 according to other reports. She has also pulled off an unprecedented television coup whereby she keeps her job with CNN, but gets to follow her heart — as she put it — and work for CBS's 60 Minutes show as well. In American television circles, that's like Tony Blair being Anglican and taking Roman Catholic communion too.

If there is an exact moment when fame strikes, for Amanpour it was when she said to Bill Clinton on camera, down the phone-link: "Don't you think your administration's constant flip-flops on Bosnia set a bad precedent?" To which Clinton replied: "There have been no constant flip-flops, Madam."

Amanpour tells me, "I wasn't going out to attack Clinton — I was searching for a word and it just came." Amanpour met Clinton face-to-face for the first time last month. "I was a little nervous, I have to tell you," she says. "but he was very, very gracious. He said: 'You know, we had an encounter, but it was on the issues. I believe what was on his mind was how he's under such personal, ad hominem attack and he appreciated that I was questioning him on issues.' At CNN headquarters, it is gospel that Amanpour's passion caused the Bosnian war to be covered and, therefore, kept the conflict, in her words, "in the White House's face for three years." "No body else wanted to go," she says. "I was prepared to go and stay, for months and months. So I got the story. It's the war of our generation; this was our Vietnam."

"Sure, the excitement's a big part. Do you know what the greatest high in the world is? There's no greater high than having survived. He's you're looking at me like I'm some kind of war groupie. It's what you want to hear us say, isn't it? Well, there, I've said it — it's the biggest shot of adrenalin there is." It's OK, I say, I think this is just my tired look.

Amanpour leans back in her chair, places her two black suede-shod feet firmly on the desk, hands behind her head. The tortoise-shell Jackie O sunglasses come off

her head and on to the desk to punctuate points. She marches them across the table from time to time. She is an adamant type, Amanpour, very definite in her conclusions. The oldest daughter of an Iranian father and an English mother, she was raised a Roman Catholic and educated at convent boarding schools in England. Does she believe in God, after all she's seen? "People have their main thread," she says, meaning yes, she keeps her belief.

"I don't feel English, although I carry British nationality. I'm half Iranian, but I don't feel that either. Citizen of the world, I guess." Later she says: "I feel foreign — maybe that's why I'm a foreign reporter."

She believes in luck. "Luck, yes absolutely. I know I'm lucky," she says. "I've been into countless situations where a bomb's exploded just before I get there, or minutes after I've left. I control my fear," she says. "When I was four years old, I learnt to ride — big horses, not ponies. I

used to fall a lot and my riding instructor stuck me right back on. He was one of the most important influences in my life."

DOES she want children herself? I'm just checking really, as she's been quite clear on this in the past. "That's bullshit," she erupts. "All these old interviews that people constantly recycle. Maybe, I made that statement once three years ago. At that time I was 100 per cent for my career. But then you get to a point where you think, well, I've done this and now what else is there?"

"I am now more open to the possibility of having children. I'm looking forward to a more stable personal life. It may mean decreasing the amount of risk you take — if you have children you're obliged to be responsible."

She is still leaning back in her chair, legs on table, in the classic Hollywood pose of a male editor. For one brief moment, the sunglasses come to rest on her stomach. And suddenly she smiles what I can only call a two-million-dollar smile. She's happy at this instant, Amanpour, and it shows. Catching that smile, it's the first time I realise just how magnetic she can be.

Which is the point of this story. Amanpour was the most influential reporter in Bosnia because she works for CNN, the channel the White House watches and the one that reaches the most households. But she also had an impact because of her personality, which comes through loud and clear on screen. For all she is about everything, she went to Bosnia, saw what was going on, and "told it like it was".



Christiane Amanpour on survival... "It's the biggest shot of adrenalin there is"

Her broadcasts on Serb aggression have led some to criticise her for lack of neutrality. She explodes when I mention it. "Whoa, it's good you caught me at 10.30 in the morning. It drives me crazy when this neutrality thing comes up. Objectivity, that great journalistic buzz-word,

means giving all sides a fair hearing — not treating all sides the same — particularly when all sides are not the same. When you're neutral in a situation like Bosnia, you are an accomplice — an accomplice to genocide."

She is similarly sensitive on the subject of her looks. "I don't worry about hair and make-up like other people you would usually interview. I'm a field reporter, not a celebrity."

She is edgy about this, it seems to me, because she doesn't want her appearance to have anything to do with her success, but she is distinctly generous there, because, clearly her Bianca Jagger-style good looks, raven hair and high cheekbones have helped on television — and so what?

Like the money issue really — why the big mystery? "I'd like to clear up the rumours, but I can't. Wags you brought up to talk about money? Well to me, it's completely distasteful," she says. Oh dear, I don't suppose we shall ever find out now.

But in a society such as ours, is \$24-35,000 a proper salary for an MP, especially in the kind of Parliament which, as reformers, we would like to see? Of course it is not. It is a sign of our civic decline that MPs are scared to make the case for proper payment, but it would be an even greater sign if they are condemned to remain so poorly paid.

To accept that the Prime Minister of Britain is worth only £84,000 is not to take a moral line, but to accept the debauched public morality of the Thatcher years. How can it be right that the woman who announces the results of the lottery is deemed worthy of an income more than six times that of the PM? How can it be right that a footballer bought by Middlesbrough from Juventus this week will earn more in a month than John Major in twelve?

INTERVIEW 15

You get what you pay for



Martin Kettle

ON Wednesday, MPs will have a dizzy privilege, given to very few who lead their lives outside either communes or boardrooms. They will have the chance to decide how much to pay themselves. And not only that. They can also decide how much to pay every government minister and the Prime Minister as well.

On the table, is the report published this week by the Senior Salaries Review Body which recommends giving our politicians some of the biggest rises that they have ever had. The review body thinks an MP should now be worth £43,000, a Cabinet minister £103,000, and the PM £143,000. For their pay to rise to such levels, MPs would need a 26 per cent increase, ministers nearly 50 per cent and the PM more than 70 per cent.

Most of us would leap at such a chance. But will the politicians take the self-service opportunity which has been presented to them? Or will they simply bow to the pressure of the Whips, and take a 3 per cent increase all round?

Being politicians who are running for office within ten months, the sensible bet is that they will play safe. The voters don't approve of politicians and they disapprove even more of politicians who give themselves big pay increases. The pressure is very great to follow the cautious approach. In other words, they will probably decide against the review body and opt instead to put an MP's pay up from £34,085 to £35,108, a minister's from £69,651 to £71,741 and John Major's from £84,217 to £86,743.

There is, however, a chance that they will rebel against their masters and go for the bigger rises that Sir Michael Perry's review body has proposed. I urge them to choose the bolder course. Not only do our politicians deserve the higher rates, it is in all our interests that they should get them.

Putting a price on a politician's work is not easy. But the Perry report offers eloquent evidence of the immensity of hard work and high responsibility of the overwhelming majority of MPs. Yes, of course in the end they are mostly just lobby fodder. Yes, of course there are too many of them — the case for a reduction in the size of the House of Commons is unanswerable, and will become far greater if and when devolution is introduced.

But, in a society such as ours, is \$24-35,000 a proper salary for an MP, especially in the kind of Parliament which, as reformers, we would like to see? Of course it is not. It is a sign of our civic decline that MPs are scared to make the case for proper payment, but it would be an even greater sign if they are condemned to remain so poorly paid.

To accept that the Prime Minister of Britain is worth only £84,000 is not to take a moral line, but to accept the debauched public morality of the Thatcher years. How can it be right that the woman who announces the results of the lottery is deemed worthy of an income more than six times that of the PM? How can it be right that a footballer bought by Middlesbrough from Juventus this week will earn more in a month than John Major in twelve?

We should not be shocked by the proposition that the Prime Minister should be paid £143,000. On the contrary, we should be shocked that he is not. The Perry report reaches its recommendation by comparing the PM's job with that of the chairman of a huge multi-national, exercising a clear influence in the world economy. But if that was really the case, Mr Major would be on a £1 million salary.

REMEMBER Nolan? That was the report on standards in public life which last year laid bare the fact that MPs have begun increasingly to supplement their incomes from outside sources. It also documented the way that ministers are cashing in their political careers earlier than ever in return for well-remunerated seats on the boards of private companies. Nolan painted a picture of a political culture increasingly riddled with greed and financial self-interest. He tried to impose some extra regulations, but it was widely felt on the committees and elsewhere that none of these controls would work unless something was done about politicians' pay.

Now here is that chance. Perry chaired an independent review, established by parliament precisely so that such a question could be taken out of MPs' own hands. MPs may pretend that they would be showing responsibility by rejecting his recommendations. In that they would be doing the reverse. That is the principal reason why a decision by MPs to endorse the Perry recommendations is so strongly in the public interest.

Proper pay for MPs is the essential pre-condition for much more effective controls on other sources of outside income for politicians. On its own, it does not clean up and redignify political life. But without it, such an outcome is much harder to achieve. If they vote for 3 per cent on Wednesday, MPs are ensuring that the situation which Nolan was intended to tackle will get worse and not better. In the long run, that will bring far more discredit upon MPs than a cringing evasion of their civic duty next week.

There is, however, a chance that they will rebel against their masters and go for the bigger rises that Sir Michael Perry's review body has proposed. I urge them to choose the bolder course. Not only do our politicians deserve the higher rates, it is in all our interests that they should get them.

Putting a price on a politician's work is not easy. But the Perry report offers eloquent evidence of the immensity of hard work and high responsibility of the overwhelming majority of MPs. Yes, of course in the end they are mostly just lobby fodder. Yes, of course there are too many of them — the case for a reduction in the size of the House of Commons is unanswerable, and will become far greater if and when devolution is introduced.

But, in a society such as ours, is \$24-35,000 a proper salary for an MP, especially in the kind of Parliament which, as reformers, we would like to see? Of course it is not. It is a sign of our civic decline that MPs are scared to make the case for proper payment, but it would be an even greater sign if they are condemned to remain so poorly paid.

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The word from South Africa is love me, love my Party

A small British lobby is attempting to drive a wedge between Mandela and the ANC, says ANTHONY SAMPSON

PRESIDENT Mandela's state visit to London which begins on Monday will be, at his request, a much more democratic occasion than the usual ceremonial. It will include a concert at the Albert Hall, a visit to Brighton, a tree-planting and a walkabout in Trafalgar Square — the scene of so many anti-apartheid protests. The busy schedule will be a further test of stamina for the man who two weeks later will celebrate his 78th birthday in Pretoria.

Few British people will challenge his reputation as a major world statesman with unique moral authority. But he is determined to project the visit further; he wants to reassure this country that his government, led by the African National Congress, is providing a stable and competitive environment for the



Still fighting for the ANC: Mandela is on a mission

trayed himself as a "white Zulu" and enjoys speaking at Buthelei rallies and conferences. His actual political agenda is vague and naive; he talks about breaking up South Africa into 30 components, with the Zulus reforming their nation; but he gives no clear picture of how they would survive as a separate state.

Buthelei's campaign was encouraged by his British allies including Ian Greer, the lobbyist who once worked for Margaret Thatcher. Buthelei found a useful platform in London from which to attack the ANC, and the communists within it, concealing the fact that they have embraced free enterprise policies.

South African communists have quite different connotations to communists elsewhere, after their long history with a tradition of heroic opposition to apartheid — more like French communists in the anti-Nazi resistance of the second world war. But Buthelei, like Goldsmith, has thrived on anti-communist crusades.

He has always stressed his long friendship with Mandela, and his efforts to get him released from jail. But a document released in the trial of the former defence chief Magnus Malan showed that Buthelei complained that the campaign to release Mandela in the mid-eighties was "irresponsible".

Aspinall and Goldsmith were soon able to influence the conservative media on Buthelei's behalf. In the Sunday Times, which has long been close to Aspinall, the gossip columnist Taki and Carla Powell, the wife of Lady Thatcher's ex-private secretary, joined in the fray.

In the Daily Telegraph, Boris Johnson, the paper's expert on Brussels and Tory politics, wrote a long interview with Buthelei, perpetuating the myth that he had consistently campaigned for Mandela's release and endorsing his attacks on the ANC.

The Times had long supported Buthelei through its correspondent, R W Johnson, biographer of Buthelei's aide, the late Rowley Arentsen. Last week, William Rees-Mogg, a close friend of Goldsmith, attacked the ANC for being "under strong communist influences" and for "blocking privatisation".

though Mandela has clearly endorsed privatisation, as he will re-emphasise in London. The Sunday Telegraph has long been fiercely critical of the ANC, influenced by its owner Conrad Black and Goldsmith, who is a director. Last week their city editor Bill Jamieson was invited to South Africa, to interview the ministers of finance and trade. Two days after he arrived, he wrote a long article about the crime-rate, with no mention of the new national anti-crime campaign which has led to spectacular arrests.

The British anti-ANC lobby has had negligible influence inside South Africa. But its impact may be more pernicious here — discouraging the investment which is one of Mandela's highest priorities.

Mandela himself is unlikely to be disheartened. He has spent most of his life countering the pessimism of rightwingers predicting a bloodbath or a race war. Current problems are much less intrinsically than those he has resolved. But he is not helped by those who praise him as a great world leader, while trying to undermine the organisation on which he depends. As he himself says: "Don't praise me to damn the rest."

Only one charity's guide to Will making has Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark

Making or changing your will? Your questions answered. Ours. Our free Will Guide is full of essential information about making or changing a Will. And it has gained Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark, so you should find it clear and easy to understand. The Guide also gives you information about the Parkinson's Disease Society, the only charity working exclusively to help people with Parkinson's disease and their families, and to find a cure for this distressing and disabling disease. Please return the coupon below for your free copy of our Will Guide. To: Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom, Dept: GD/D/6/7, 22 Upper Woburn Place, London, WC1H 0RA. Please send me the free guide to making or changing my Will which has gained Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark. Title: Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss (please circle) Name: Address: Post Code: Parkinson's Society

Quality of foetal care

VISCOUNT Brentford's proposed bill to outlaw abortion on the grounds of foetal abnormalities is a chilling prospect for future parents.

Within the last month I have undergone a Nuchal Translucency Scan to detect Down's Syndrome. Unlike Ann Furedi (Don't take away a mother's right, Guardian, July 3) I was also given a blood test and categorised as high risk.

There was no doubt in my mind that I should undergo an invasive diagnostic test, which in itself carries a risk of miscarriage, and that if this test was positive I would terminate the pregnancy. After six years of infertility I cannot begin to describe the anguish we felt throughout the procedure and as we waited for the results.

The suggestion that we are akin to the practitioners of Nazi eugenics is grossly distasteful. To continue a pregnancy carrying an abnormal foetus which stood a 45 per cent risk of miscarrying appeared utterly foolhardy.

Lord Brentford should try to imagine what it is like for a woman in this situation before he proceeds with his bill. Ellie Lee, Pro-Choice Network, Scott Road, Oxford OX3 7TD.

AT LAST, an unapologetic defence of the right to decide to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, including Down's Syndrome cases. Those opposed to abortion point to the happy lives of people with Down's, and argue that to have them aborted is Nazi-style eugenics. But lots of us wouldn't be here if our mothers had had abortion rights — including myself.

Frankly, I find the idea that parliamentarians and medics should decide who should and shouldn't have access to abortion far more alarming than leaving women in this difficult position to come to their own decision — without the moral blackmail too often involved in this debate. Sara Finchcliffe, Brighton.



Rise again, Manchester

WHY are we still planning an underfunded fund in Greenwich to mark the millennium when there is a much more deserving opportunity at hand? We should be looking for a project which will inspire future generations with our vision and lift the spirits of the citizens of today.

So far, Michael Heseltine has promised £80 million — a drop in the ocean in the light of the destruction caused by the bomb. The Government should match private money pound for pound, with the National Lottery allocating a similar amount. The funding should become a world model for the 21st century, incorporating the best of the new with the tradition of the old.

As your article (After the horror, the heartache, July 4) shows, those affected most are already proclaiming themselves forgotten. Individuals and small companies directly affected by the blast should be given the opportunity to actively contribute to the project, with funding secured to make this possible.

Support for Greenwich has only come about because the deputy prime minister twisted a few corporate arms. Surely big businesses in London and Birmingham should stop squabbling about who should fund this meaningless event.

Here is a chance to celebrate 2000 in a way which would impact on the lives of millions. R M Anger, 7 Warren Heights, Plain Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN26 6TG.

AS AN exiled Mancunian I was shocked by Peter Hetherington's article. Like most other people I had not realised how widespread the impact on local people was and how little official help had been forthcoming. I am sure there would be support for a Manchester Fund — organised via the Guardian perhaps?

I also wondered what Manchester's sporting and cultural funds were doing to raise funds. Maybe a football match or pop concert would raise not only money but also awareness. It seems people in Manchester could do with some assurance that they have not been forgotten. Val Straw, Down House, Upper Harestone, Caerhan, Surrey CR3 6BQ.

SUDDENLY, everyone wants to rebuild Manchester, including the deputy prime minister, your architecture correspondent (June 26) and leader writer (City of dreams, June 29). The last time this happened we got the Arndale. Beware of the con-men! Only the eccentric will sup-

port Arndale on aesthetic grounds. On economic grounds, it has a number of fans. Arndale has been a hang-out for a couple of generations of kids, and, but for the lack of a few seats, is much loved by many of their grandparents. One of the things that cities are good at is adapting to other people's bad decisions. Like building a wall around 10 acres of city centre public space and locking it up at night. What with Arndale and Anderson, it's a wonder we survived the seventies.

I'm faintly insulted by the queue of rebuilders. Mr Heseltine knows Manchester's shopping list: a stadium, a second runway (perhaps), extensions to the Northern Quarter and Ancoats, areas slaughtered by Arndale and left in near terminal decline.

The second in command of an out-going government can say anything, and an international design competition isn't quite so facile as a garden festival. The unseemly rush to major surgery reminds me of the amputee who woke up missing the wrong leg. Phil Griffin, The Design Centre, 44 Canal Street, Manchester M1 3WD.

WITH the leading architect lining up to battle for the commission for replacement for the bombed

Arndale Centre, might I propose that the rules of the competition forbid any presentation that does not show the design from a viewpoint accessible to the general public? That is, no pretty three dimensional models, or a passing pigeon and so attractive to the city fathers, apparently.

And all other neighbouring buildings which give the new structure its context should be shown with equal clarity. J M Carter, 27 Church Street, Golcar, Huddersfield HD7 4PX.

THERE seems to have been some misunderstanding about my view of an architectural competition for the rebuilding of central Manchester. My preference would be for local people working with local artists, designers and architects to replace the bombed area. Schools of art and architecture in particular could start the ball rolling. The more public, and the more local people are involved, the better.

There have been many examples of competitions diverting attention from local participation and with the great number of competitions around today I think there may well be an unsuccessful response. Terry Farrell, Farrell & Partners, 11 Grosvenor Gardens, London W8 6PL.

Robust arguments that make hospital league tables look sickly

THERE is much more to hospital league tables than meets the eye (Hospital ratings "give false picture", July 3). They not only ignore quality of care and outcomes but, more importantly, underfunding.

Last year, the City Hospital Trust in Birmingham recorded only one cancelled operation and received a four star rating in the league tables. Since then it has faced cuts of £3.2 million to meet a recurring deficit and now, in yesterday's tables, is near the bottom of the league with 106 cancelled operations.

On the other hand, Good Hope Hospital Trust remains a poor performer, recording 186 cancelled operations this year, compared with 174 in 1995. It has had to face cuts of £1.7 million in 1995-96 and must save another £3 million this year. By comparison, the University Hospital Trust has improved its performance over the past year, from 181 to 27 cancellations. This coincides with a health authority cash injection of £10 million in

June 1996 specifically designed to reduce cancellations and long trolley waits.

The UK as a whole spends less on health than other developed countries. Yet South Birmingham Community Health Council and economists from York University have shown that even within existing resources, Birmingham and other inner-city areas are losing out by many millions of pounds. Ursula Pearts, Vice Chair, South Birmingham CHC, 1802 Pershore Road, Corridor, Birmingham B30 3AU.

THE star ratings for hospital trusts are a non-metric scoring system. Therefore to "average" them for each trust and produce a league table is as much garbage as the original statistics they are based on. Dr William Notcutt, James Paget Hospital, Lowestoft Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 6LA.

Poor way to provide justice for all

YOUR leader comment (Justice for the poor, July 3) on the white paper on legal aid rather misses the point. These "welcome features" you refer to such as using mediation, alternative dispute resolution and Citizens Advice Bureaux are untested theories which may sound attractive but are no justification for restricting access to law. People must be able to enforce their rights in the courts. How can they do this without a legal aid scheme? What the Lord Chancellor has done is to propose a system that will exclude everyone except the very wealthy from seeking justice. Isabel Manley, Vice Chair, Law Centres Federation, 18-19 Warren Street, London W1P 6DB.

WHEN Norman Lamont took his tenant to court he received legal aid of £4,000 towards his solicitor's bill. When William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treas-

ury, Lord Trenggarr, former Defence Minister and other such deserving poor wanted advice from their private solicitors on how to handle questions from the Scott arms-to-Iraq inquiry, they received legal aid of £750,750 to do so. Presumably their help from the taxpayer was non-means tested.

Most people who require legal aid are not in such a fortunate position. They are already subject to stringent tests on their own means and upon the merits of their case. If they have to go to law to assert or defend their rights, it is usually because there is no other avenue of redress open to them. Rights which cannot be asserted or defended because the Government chooses to deny access to competent legal help are not worth having at all. Perhaps that is the real purpose of these reforms. Myles Hickey, Dowse & Co, 32-35 Dalston Lane, London E8 3DP.

A Country Diary

THE BURREN, IRELAND: The great advantage in leaving the Burren for several weeks is the pure joy of our return. We round the last bend on the hill and see beneath us the wide bay framed by its hills, beautiful in their austerity. Our hearts rejoice. Then we "welcome, somer, with thy some soft" and, like the school teachers, plan to go on "pilgrimages". High in the hills we still find mountain avens, gentians, especially this year because of the late spring. However, it is the quest for the wild orchids that recently sent us forth. On a day of blue skies and sea we walked down the lane to O'Loghlen's Castle, checking the nearby fulacht fadh (ancient cooking place). On reaching the shore, the sun's heat reflecting from the limestone rock and pavements, we scrambled over boulders, stones, sometimes treading the clints (limestone pavements), all the time carefully scrutinising the field edges. At

last, among the rocks in a grassy oval bordered with birch roses are the white orchids. I stopped counting at 50. On our return by the lane to the Black Head road we noted the intermingling of warm ruby fuchsias with the pale elegance of wild roses. Indeed almost everywhere along the road and lane edges grow the spotted orchids. Some orchids I have never seen, but this year, thanks to our friends, Doreen and Bernie Conyn, we were lucky. Four of us, pilgrims all, on what has now become a rare rain-filled day, tramped along the edge of a summer meadow, full of buttercups, then through short grass and there they were, clusters of them, bee orchids, each tall spike with three, four, five or six blooms and, for the name implies, closely resembling a bumblebee, black yellow on a rich pink petals. Ah! "Hard is in May" (Chaucer) — or in June or July. SARAH POYNTZ

Tory tramps

UNFORTUNATELY, your theatre critic wasn't asked to review the Conservative Party's new production of Waiting For Godot, the trailer for which was shown on television (Spook manifesto backfires on Tories, July 3). In their performance as the comic clapped-out tramps, Messrs Heseltine and Ma-whinney were perfect. With Sir James Goldsmith in the role of Pozzo hauling poor old Lucky (Johnnie Rimmer) around on a leash, it must have been an absolute scream. Presumably the part of the boy messenger was taken alternately by John Redwood and Michael Portillo.

It is too much to hope that the video will soon be available? Bernard Cashman, 25 Church End, Biddenham, Bedford.

SURELY the counter slogan to "New Labour — New Dangers" must be: "Old Tories — Old Dangers". T Gooding, 11 Wharton Street, London WC1X 9PX.

TRUST Tony Blair will expel any Labour Party members who accuse him of being autocratic. Keith Mack, 137 Pickhurst Lane, Hayes, Kent BR2 7HU.

Between Boris and the deep red party

IT WAS a Russian MP who, in a radio interview this week, explained the dilemma she and others faced in the presidential elections: she was critical of President Yeltsin and many of the policies that had brought tremendous hardship to large numbers of ordinary people, but on no account, the MP warned, would there be a return to the totalitarian system which had existed for more than 70 years under the communists.

As Archie Brown wrote (July 5) Zyuganov's praise for Stalin demonstrates how little the communists have changed; moreover, there was the constant attempt by the CP to minimise the terror, persecution, slave camps, and the total denial of all civil liberties and democratic rights from 1917 to the final years, when Gorbachev (a traitor to Russian communists) started the move towards some democratisation.

There is also another unfortunate tradition of both the tsarist and the Bolshevik

regimes which has emerged again, and this is the blatant anti-semitism of a number of those involved in the present struggle for power. Zyuganov has openly declared such views, but not during the election campaign. And only this week Russia's "Inochet, Alexander Lebed, made his poisonous racist outburst. Clearly, there is much further to go before Russia becomes a normal functioning democracy, but even with all the blemishes, the Russians now enjoy civil liberties which were only known previously during the six months or so between the overthrow of tsarism and Lenin's Bolshevik revolution.

There is the danger of a return to dictatorship, if not to communism, but under a Lebed or some other general or colonel remains, and hence the need for the warning that any such regime would face economic, and hopefully political, isolation. David Winick MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Sainsbury's sets out its stall for shareholders

WE MUST take issue with your Notebook (July 3) which implies that in terms of the annual report, Sainsbury's (and other leading companies) may be giving shareholders less than they have the right to receive.

Like an increasing number of large companies, we use the Companies Act Regulations that allow companies to send shareholders a summary financial statement instead of the full report and accounts. In our case, the summary is part of an annual review which contains the chairman's statement and a substantial amount of operational and financial information. The summary includes a statement on corporate governance and gives a freephone number for shareholders wishing to receive a copy of the full accounts.

When we adopted this two book approach for the first time last year all shareholders received both books and were asked, via a return card, whether they wished to continue to receive the annual accounts as well as the annual review. Less than 3 per cent said they wished to receive both books. New shareholders

are asked whether they wish to receive the full accounts. There is no intention of depriving shareholders of information. We consider this approach to represent best practice. Shareholders receive a focused communication tailored to their requirements.

Lastly, our registrars certainly have not run out of copies of either book. Nigel R Matthews, Group Secretary, J Sainsbury Plc, Stamford House, Stamford Street, London SE1 8LL.

The Guardian Offer

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Meet Damon, the poet

Blur's Damon Albarn tells CAROLINE SULLIVAN he is tired of being a star, tired of Yob Pop and tired of feuding. That's why he's reading one of his poems at the Albert Hall tomorrow

ON SUNDAY, 60 poets will colonise the Royal Albert Hall for a Poetry Super-Jam. Among those attempting to, as the advance publicity promises, "levitate" the venue will be Heathcote Williams, Adrian Mitchell and Russian laureate Andrei Voznesensky. Oh, and Damon Albarn.

Damon Albarn? What on earth is Blur's mockney-accented, Essex-and-proud lead singer doing among this company? It's not as if he were the most dedicated sort of rock star who considers his lyrics to be poetry in disguise, although he did rhyme Prozac with Balzac in Country House. Yet he'll be closing the nine-hour event by reciting a work called *essex dogs*, accompanied only by a DAT player. Sounds like poetry to me.

"I'm uncomfortable with the word poetry," he says, his voice like sludge after an early-morning flight from Copenhagen. "I write words, which usually eventually turn out to be lyrics. If I wanted to write 'poetry', I'd be more structured about it. I think modern language is more spurts of energy than structure."

Which pretty well describes *essex dogs* (see right), a snatch of which he has fully recited: "down remembrance avenue/dogs somersault through sprinklers on summer lawns". Don't mean to be a philistine, Dame, but what does it mean?

"It's an amalgam of all the negativity I've felt since I was a teenager. When I was at that sensitive age and had spots, we were preoccupied with CND and nuclear weapons and I assumed everything would be wiped out soon. I never really got that out of my system, and it's coming through in my new words."

A dressed-up form of Essex Dogs will be on the new Blur album, alongside a dozen other tracks that are "as dark as we ever get". To put it another way, the luv-a-duck caricatures made famous by 1994's two-million-selling *Parakeets* are about to be replaced by something more challenging. The principal lyricist of the country's second-biggest pop act, Albarn hereby presents Blur's cerebral side.

"I'm not working class and I've got a pretty face, otherwise I'd have been taking seriously all along," he argues with good reason. Blur are the most literate of the Britpop horde; Albarn can discuss Michael Ondaatje as fluently as he can chart positions. It was Parklife's working-class pastiche that landed

him in the (as he might put it) *merde*. Accused of co-opting proletarian ends, last year Blur found themselves at war with Oasis, the "winning" southerners against the authentic gritty northerners. Oasis won with 5 million worldwide sales of (What's The Story) Morning Glory? to one million of Parklife's follow-up, *The Great Escape*, though Blur recently rallied by refusing to accept the Ivor Novello songwriting gong awarded jointly to them and Noel Gallagher.

It was a furious feud while it lasted, but Albarn's had enough. "I stopped being interested when yob bands stopped having an agenda of any kind." He has been following the rise of Oasis-inspired lad-rock with dismay. "The great consensus is that there's the ideal way to behave, and I'm a fake."

"Oasis's enmity toward us 'Oasis seem to despise intelligence. Noel once said that he's never read a book — the idea of the leading cultural icon being proud of not reading is sad"

was their cultural tool — working-class boys who mean what they say and say what they mean. For a brief period we were inextricably linked, which was mostly my doing because I changed the release date of *Country House* to coincide with their single. I thought it would be amusing, and it was, but I never had a picture of Liam on the wall to throw darts at. I can live outside that kind of thing, but they don't seem to be able to. Oasis seem to despise intelligence. Noel once said that he's never read a book in his life, and Liam's only read *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe*, which is Liam all over.

The idea of the leading cultural icon being proud of not reading is sad.

If the Gallaghers drop by the Notting Hill pied à terre, Albarn shares with Elastica's Justine Frischmann, they'll find Alexander Trocchi's *Cain's Book* on the nightstand. He's reading it on the recommendation of the Su-

perJam's organiser, Michael Horowitz. Damon and the American "poet, kazooid, clown and visual artist" met when he turned up on Albarn's doorstep one day, waving a book and the address from a fan. Albarn made him a cup of tea, and Horowitz talked him into playing the SuperJam, which is the biggest such bash since Allen Ginsburg and Trocchi filled the Albert Hall in 1965. Back then, tumbic pentamer and pop didn't mix, but this time there's a rock contingent of Patti Smith, Nick Cave and Ray Davies appearing with the band.

It's Albarn's first solo gig, but he says he's not nervous. Rather, he sees it as a way out of Britpop.

"I don't want to be part of the mainstream at the moment, which is why I'd rather be doing this thing on Sunday," he says, his head bobbing into sleep. "I have a problem with the narcissism of music right now, this thing of 'We don't have to do anything original as long as we believe in what we do'."

Did he long to be Sylvia Plath? "No, but I wanted to be Hermann Hesse, because there's a great deal of peace in his work."

That's something the Bard of Colchester doesn't experience much any more. Fame seems to have been a deeply disillusioning experience for him. In the five years before Parklife, Blur were the perennial underdogs of the English indie scene, ridiculed for being educated and not troubling to conceal it. Parklife made them top dogs (canines are an Albarn motif; he even owns a racing greyhound called Honest Guy) for a sparkling instant before the Oasis scorched-earth policy. The *Great Escape*, their last chance to trounce Oasis, was weaker than Parklife, and Blur are underdogs once again. The money probably cheers them up, though.

There will be a single in the autumn, and a new album within six months. In the meantime, Albarn has been spending much of his time outside Britain, waiting for Noel to let him go. "It's not our time to be playing here. I want to stay away till I'm ready to come back and face the dogs."

The SuperJam is part of the weekend-long Poetry Olympics. The Children's Poetry is at the Tabernacle, Powis Square, London W11 today, and the SuperJam is at the Albert Hall tomorrow at 1.30pm. SuperJam tickets are available (£10-£25) on the door or can be booked on 0171-589 8212 or 0171-344 4444.



essex dogs by Damon Albarn

down remembrance avenue
dogs somersault through sprinklers on summer lawns
and on the plains of cement
english army grind their teeth
in terminal pubs

besty scores a hat trick
he drinks, he fights, he fucks everywhere

6am is awash in violet dulux
and the essex dogs are all loved up

With a little yelp from our Friends

Television

Stuart Jeffries

THEY killed him. They jumped on the man's ceiling, all five of those gorgeous narcissists, until he was wheeled out of the building to his final resting place. But that's what the stars of *Friends* (Channel 4) do: they stomp on strangers until they change countries or die.

Heckles had to die. He was a stock irritant, an ugly man forever wearing a shabby dressing gown over a stained T-

shirt. He was also obligingly bonkers. He complained about the noise from his apartment: "You're doing it again. 'We're doing what against?' 'You're disturbing my birds.' 'You don't have birds.' 'I could have birds.'"

Heckles having heckled, he went back to his apartment: "I'm going to rejoin my dinner party." As if. Nobody outside the charmed world of this famous five has dinner parties, or even lives worth talking about.

The stonping session symbolised perfectly the fact that beneath *Friends*' glossy comic surface is a drama of fear and hatred. No, really. This week Chandler realised that he is too

demanding of prospective girlfriends — they always have some minor flaw which turns him off. Nostrils so big that you can see your date's brain. A New York accent that makes Mira Sorvino sound like Prince Charles. That kind of thing.

But that's typical of the way *Friends* interact with the outside world. Each of the five friend or girlfriend sends a frisson of anxiety through the group that grows into a wave of revulsion. Marco, Rachel's sexually charged beau, seemed to have it all — Italian, a friend or girlfriend sends a frisson of anxiety through the group that grows into a wave of revulsion. Marco, Rachel's sexually charged beau, seemed to have it all — Italian, a

brother or sister. Incest as soap opera — that, as Brookside is currently demonstrating, is easy. But incest as comedy? I can't wait to see how *Friends*' scriptwriters handle that.

This is why it is so disturbing when people say these are an ideal group of friends. They are witty, intelligent, there for each other. They have an apartment to die for. Wouldn't you like to have mates like these? Except for the view from the balcony, I'd rather put knitting needles through my eyes. They are the most unhealthy group of friends, the most dysfunctionally co-dependent bunch since... since the last half-way decent sitcom. Who could resist them?

Rampant dysfunction, co-dependency — the same is true of *Fraser* (Channel 4). Why do *Fraser*, his dad, Niles,

Daphne and Eddie the dog all congregate so frequently at the shrink's well-appointed home, when they get on each other's nerves so much? Because this is a sitcom, not real life, and sitcoms thrive on endless neurotic exchanges. No wonder *Fraser*'s cafe is called the Cafe Nervosa; no wonder, too, the one in *Friends* is smugly named Central Perk — they are trying to pretend that they don't irritate each other.

The third series of *Fraser* opened its arms to a new radio station boss, Mercedes Ruehl, who demanded that the analyst change his phone-in show. I look forward to the inevitable verbal mud wrestling between the sexy-voiced, scabrous Ruehl and *Fraser*'s brittle-witted agent. Now that's my kind of spectator sport.

Reviews

DANCE

De Keersmaeker Festival Hall, London

VERY EARLY on in Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's epic Mozart work there's a shocking noise — the sound of audience laughter. Certainly we've heard occasional jokes in her dances before, but they've been neurotic, angry jokes cracked against a black universe. In *Un Moto Di Gioia* (made in 1992), though, 13 dancers in gorgeously ruffled and ruffled 18th century dress tumble blithely around the stage, snatching stolen kisses and sighing in romantic transports like a crowd of dippy lovers.

It's as if the sun has come out in De Keersmaeker's normally claustrophobic world — and some of what it shines on is utterly charming. The look and sound are ravishing. The stage is a 1980s rococo formal garden peopled by men and women in divinely seductive dress. The music — a series of Mozart concert arias — is played and sung with lovely deftness by Anima Eterna, whose three soprano soloists flirt and joke with the dancers with wit and ease.

In sections of the choreography, De Keersmaeker responds to her beautiful surroundings with extrovert invention. The

dancers breast the air in bouyant runs or, when the music turns turbulent, they spin and fall in wild, plunging cycles. There are tightly repetitive passages in which the women become dangerous and their steps rhythmically stab the surface of Mozart's music, and there are moments too where De Keersmaeker pushes the work's exquisite artifice into surrealism. Images of sweet eroticism segue into bizarre animal imagery as one woman dons a leopard-skin crinoline and others quiver over the stage on limbs as brittle as an insect's.

But vivid as these moments are, they add up to only a fraction of the work's two hours and after about 30 minutes it's depressingly clear that De Keersmaeker can't sustain her original impetus. Never has a work gone downhill so fast. Long sections of sketchy movement clog up the dance, using strategies that are all too familiar from her other works. The dancers fiddle elegantly with their clothes and get locked into choreographic ties in which two or three dull moves are futilely recycled, and De Keersmaeker turns a sullenly deaf ear to the dance of Mozart's music. The greatness of the music and design ruthlessly expose the limitations of her own imagination.

Judith Mackrell

THEATRE

The Comedy of Errors The Other Place, Stratford

HAVE seen funnier productions of *The Comedy of Errors* than Tim Supple's at Stratford's Other Place? But few that treat the play with such love and respect. In the past this dazzling Plautine comedy has been shortened, stylised, Broadwayised and treated as a vehicle for Des Barri: what Supple brings out is its dream-like strangeness and delight in genetic harmony.

The setting is Ephesus in rehearsal, is vital to Supple's concept so we have Adrian Lee on the 'ud (proprietor of the lute), Simon Allen on the percussive zarb and Sylvia Hallett combining violin with vocal ululations. The music both underscores the action and reminds us of the eeriness of Shakespeare's Ephesus. But this is also a play about quality, and Supple makes something almost sacred out of the quest of the uneasily separated twins for identity and their joy in physical reunion.

In the process some of the comic confusion is underplayed, but the great gain is the excavation of the sense of illusion and bafflement: the

Syracusan Antipholus (an excellent Robert Bowman) emerges dazed and weakened from Adriana's excessive hospitality and his Dromio (the equally admirable Dan Milne) describes his encounter with the hysterical kitchen maid, Luce. In the amazed tones of one who has seen the eighth wonder of the world, Ephesus, we are constantly reminded, was traditionally associated with madness and magic.

The contemporary costumes also sharpen the play's extraordinary stress on arbitrary arrest and physical beatings and remind us that modern Turkey is not exactly one of Amnesty International's favoured places. But Supple makes something genuinely moving out of the climax in which the abbess Emilia (a witty gracious Ursula Jones — blesses all the town's inhabitants before inviting them into her priory).

Supple has also found two Antipholuses. In cream-coloured suits, and two Dromios, sporting shaven heads and baggy black shorts, who look disturbingly alike. Above all, he treats the play not as a hack-piece but as a miraculous story we have never heard before.

In rep at The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon (01789-296623), until September.

Michael Billington

ROCK

Isaac Hayes Albert Hall

AT THOUSAND years ago (well, 30 anyway), Isaac Hayes was a songwriter for Stax Records in Memphis, where he co-authored soul stalwarts like Sam & Dave's *Soul Man* and Carla Thomas's *Intoxicating B-A-B-Y*. However, the Ike Hayes the world came to know and boggle at was the perpetrator of quasi-symphonic soul epics, like the marathon workout on *Walk On By* on his 1969 classic *Hot Buttered Soul*, or his wah-wah powered *Theme From Shaft* (1971).

Hayes's reputation has waxed and waned over subsequent decades, but his London appearance found the man brimming with bonhomie, and looking suitably larger than life in a ballooning black glittery outfit, sunglasses and trademark shaved head. Hayes's imposing presence was matched by the scale of his band, which teemed with percussion, keyboards and backing vocalists.

Confirming that the potent musical form of last year's *Branded Album* was no fluke, Ike charged confidently

through a selection of the historic and the brand new. *Walk On By* was given a 15-minute making, drummer Lilla Yvette Freyer laying down a vast groove for the guitarist and vocalists to wall over. Ike's reconditioned version of the *Jackson Five's* *Never Can Say Goodbye* was assembled over a massive bass which seemed to advance in an oblique, crabwise motion, with synthesizers supplying the horn arrangement as the chorus whizzed gleefully. But it was proof of Ike's enduring powers that his recent son-plea, *Fragile*, easily held its own. The band meshed deftly to generate a light, shuffling beat, shaping the instrumentation to fall in behind the chorus of *How Fragile We Are*.

For light relief, macho Ike abandoned his piano to deliver a fanciful yarn about an imaginary love affair from years ago, before wrapping his gravelly basso profundo voice around My Funny Valentine, which may never recover.

Then he gestured the ban into the ominous pulse of *Shaft*, gallumphing around the stage as if testing its load-bearing properties to destruction. Bizarre, but a little bit legendary.

Adam Sweeting

Under the skin

Radio

Anne Karpf

FROM ITS title alone, Radio 4's new Asian comedy show, *Goodness Gracious Me* signals its intention to mock the mockers. Calling itself by the name of the song from the film *The Millionaire* (and using a jazzed-up version as its signature tune), it gently takes aim at the Peter Sellers funny-voice stereotyping of Asians.

The most successful sketch in this first programme turned the tables on the colonisers, treating them to the same culinary racism as that experienced by the colonised. We're in Delhi and a group of young Indians, going out for

"an English", ask for the blandest thing on the menu, order 24 plates of chips, and quip about the digestive problems they'll suffer all week.

Many will praise this thracking of stereotypes through humour rather than rage. It's certainly a confident show, without sacred cows and with a surprising number of sketches about gender, although most could have been improved by being crisper and shorter. The casual inclusion of Indian references suggests that, while the series will provoke guffaws of white recognition, it's not afraid to treat its own culture as central, rather than other.

A joint production of BBC Radio and Television Light Entertainment departments, its unusual genesis might seem to demonstrate the benefits of bilingualism, but actu-

ally it arose because television was unwilling to risk commissioning a series, agreeing to finance a cheaper radio pilot instead. This confirms fears that in the new BBC, radio will act increasingly as TV's rehearsal room.

There was another take on Anglo-Asian society in Diane Samuels's new play *Swine* (Radio 4), which kicked off the Monday Play's in July series. In an improbable but seductive alliance, a female Rabbi and an Asian schoolgirl come together through their shared horror at the desecration by a pig's head of a mosque and a Jewish cemetery. During its first third, the play was a standard piece of social realism played at a pitch so intense that it was hard to see how it could soar any higher.

But this is where Samuels turned really audacious. The pig speaks to Ayesha, telling her where all its fragments (pigskin purse or Sunday roast) are scattered. Where-

upon she and Rabbi Judith set off on a mad journey around Britain to reassemble them and restore the pig to wholeness.

Samuels demands suspension of disbelief by the bucket, and some of the time I couldn't oblige, anticipating a frenzied *Animal Liberation* polemic. But the author was generally one step ahead, giving Judith nicely wry lines like "if you say so, Doctor Doolittle", and letting her main characters' sense of disbelief mirror our own. If you could submit, you realised that this was less an example of magic realism, and more a mystical play about morality, a search-for-the-Holy-Grail piece.

But it was the approaching climax, as they headed for Salisbury Plain (shades of *Hardy's Tess*), which sent shivers down the spine, and the final scene where thousands of pigs suddenly appeared in the dark told you that this had turned into a great piece of radio writing.

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THEATRE



Ray Howard-Jones

A life on the land's edge

RAY Howard-Jones, an artist of considerable but perhaps still under-appreciated talent, has died at the age of 93. She spent much of her long life struggling against what she experienced as the disadvantage of having been born a woman.

She was a mess of contradictions, a very feminine woman who signed her work "Ray" (her Christian name was actually Rosemary) partly to disguise her gender. She was convinced that her technical abilities as an artist were as good as those of her male contemporaries such as David Jones, Michael Ayrton, John Piper and Graham Sutherland.

In the end, she had the satisfaction of seeing her work in public and private collections

around the world. The one place where her work had always been thoroughly appreciated was in west Wales, in the old county of Pembrokeshire, where she spent half her life, rooted there like the lichen to the rocks.

She had an instinctive love for the natural world that stemmed from her childhood in Berkshire, where her father was a vet and had racing stables. Later she lived with a guardian in south Wales where she rode, swam, sailed, scaled cliffs, all with a determination to do anything a boy might do. By the time she was a teenager, the only thing that really mattered to her was her work, her painting and poetry.

At 17, she went to the Slade where her teachers included Wilson Steer and the formidable

Professor Tonks. Her line drawing was admired as exquisite, fine and detailed and it earned this already frail and consumptive girl the challenging task of helping plastic surgeons to reconstruct the faces of men who had been seriously disfigured in the first world war. Her job, using old photographs, was to provide the surgeons with blueprints for their work.

Her real career as an artist, however, did not get going until she was nearly 40. First she had to cope with tuberculosis and a botched operation that left her in pain for the rest of her life. Then she had to care for ageing relatives. Between the wars she undertook archaeological drawings for the National Museum of Wales and also found time to work with Cardiff slum chil-

dren, using art to help them escape their dismal surroundings and circumstances.

By the time of the second world war she was able to bulldoze her way into being one of the very few accredited women war artists, working on recording, among other subjects, preparations for D-Day. A collection of her work is in the Imperial War Museum.

After the war, she went to Pembrokeshire, to the area she had fallen in love with as early as 1915, on a visit to Tenby. From then on, she spent much of her life there, alone or with the photographer Raymond Moore. She retained a London studio but lived and worked a great deal on Skomer, the island just off the Pembrokeshire coast which, largely through her

efforts, is now a wildlife sanctuary.

She had an extraordinary rapport with living creatures. When I was making a film about her, I found her one day drawing Red Admiral butterflies. Nothing unusual about that, except she was festooned with hundreds of the creatures — they were in her hair, down both arms, covering her semi-naked, bronzed body in a red-brown haze. Luckily I caught the amazing scene on film, because no-one would have believed a word of my description.

When she went for her daily swim in the icy Atlantic below her tiny corrugated iron studio on its 200-foot cliff, she would immediately be joined by gangs of seals and dolphins. "Grockles" (summer visitors) were often be-

lieved to be told off by this wispy, naked, 80-year-old, emerging from the waves to shoot them from her bay.

Even more amazing was to see the apparent joy with which she was greeted when she ventured among the 70,000 gannets on the island of Grassholm, 20 miles out into the Atlantic. These big birds, even when guarding eggs or chicks, nuzzled her legs when you or I might have had ours broken.

On one of our visits to Grassholm we knelt together in the tussocks of grass as her unerring archaeological eye picked out walls and field boundaries — so the Mabnogi legends were right, the first Welsh in Wales had lived here 25 centuries ago. Ray wrote, and later read to me, a poem of that place:

*The queening sea, in quiet silence held,
Lays a hand
In darkened line
Elding the land's edge.*

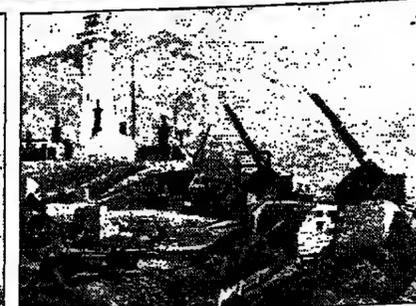
*Within the encircled listening
A living force
Moved in unmysterious way
Elding us fast.*

To the end of her long life Ray continued to work. It was all that mattered and nothing was allowed to get in its way despite frequent visits to hospital, usually as the result of yet another broken bone. Well into her eighties she continued to scramble, goatlike, down the cliff to paint, draw, think, pray (she had become an oblate of the Anglican Benedictine Order) . . . and write. She would often tell you that she was a poet first, a painter second. She spoke her own poetry well and recorded some for a radio programme we did together, reading it with depth and meaning. She had a lovely voice.

Even now I can hardly come to terms with her death. Maybe being a woman was a disadvantage and did hinder her work becoming better known. Those of us who share her love of Pembrokeshire will remember her with admiration, love and more than a touch of envy.

Roger Worley

Rosemary (Ray) Howard-Jones, artist, born May 30, 1903; died June 25, 1996



Far shores . . . left, Ray Howard-Jones on Skomer Island. Above, her 1944 painting, Building of the North Battery; below, Song of the Seas, 1960s



Lewis B Combs

The last fighting Seabee

THE extraordinary longevity of American second world war admirals has surely passed its peak with the death, aged 101, of Admiral Lewis B Combs, co-founder and deputy chief of the US Navy's Seabees. The always-busy Seabee (the construction battalion) were in the van of the advance across the Pacific, building airfields under fire in impossible places.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour at the end of 1941, Combs was second in command of the naval bureau of yards and docks under Rear-Admiral Ben Moreel: the USN civil engineering section had 120 officers. Although stripped of its battleship in the unheralded attack, the USN expanded phenomenally around its handful of unscathed aircraft carriers and took the war to the enemy, 6,000 miles away across the Pacific — the largest naval campaign in history. The Fleet had to fetch everything from home and its "forward" bases could be thousands of miles behind the front. So the Seabees came to build ashore.

Moreel and Combs had been working on the concept, to cope with long-distance war, for four years. The Seabees at their peak numbered a third of a million men; they built more than 100 airstrips and accommodation for 1.5 million. One of their trademarks was the Quonset hut, named after their base at Quonset, Rhode Island.

When one of the first front-line Seabee units brought its heavy gear ashore at Guadalcanal, incredulous Marines asked the over-age volunteer engineers whether they had come to the right sector. One 50-year-old Seabee's mother had forbidden him to join up in 1917 but he was not going to miss out this time. The Seabee's exploits became legend. A Seabee driving a bulldozer up a body-contested beach used his blade as a shield and then buried himself under the machine's plow that had foolishly fired on him. When Hollywood made *The Fighting Seabees* in 1944, the lead went to John Wayne. Combs was technical adviser.

Lewis Combs was raised at Hesselton in upstate New York. He was commissioned into the USN when America entered the first world war in 1917, a year after graduating in civil engineering. He married Laura Warren in 1926 (she died this March) and rose slowly but steadily in the navy.

Moreel was impatient of red tape and left most of the Seabee administration to Combs. But Combs abandoned his Washington desk to visit his volunteers as they built docks and hospitals overnight, cleared jungle for airstrips and set up ammunition and fuel dumps, bunkers and shelters in awful conditions on terrible terrain. The Seabee's were the most spectacular embodiment of the American "can do" spirit.

Combs then headed the Atlantic section of the bureau of yards and docks before retiring in 1947. He returned to Hesselton as head of the department of civil engineering at his old college, retiring in 1952.

Peter Cox

Heien Sinclair Glatz, musician, born March 13, 1908; died June 16, 1996



Helen Glatz, music-maker . . . PHOTOGRAPH: KATE MOUNT

Helen Glatz

Music in the heart and head

IN THE late 1940s, Helen Glatz, who has died aged 88, arrived almost penniless at Dartington Hall, the west country school and community.

She was looking for Imogen Holst, who was then in charge of the music there. The two women had been students together at the Royal College of Music, and Holst, who had set up a course for rural music teachers, offered her a part-time job. There Glatz was to remain for half a century, teaching, conducting and composing.

Helen was a highly talented student, an RCM contemporary not only of Holst but of Elizabeth Maconchy, Elizabeth Lutyens, Thea Musgrave and Benjamin Britten. Taught by Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob, Helen was

awarded the Albert Medal for composition and a travelling scholarship to Hungary to study with Zoltán Kodály. Hungary changed her life. She found tremendous stimulation in the national folk music, and met and married its composer. His father was an artist, renowned for his paintings of Hungarian peasant life. Helen lived with the family in Budapest throughout the war and gave birth to her son, Christopher, there.

When the Red Army approached, she and the family fled to underground and live in cellars, while the battle for the city raged over their heads. She never talked about what was clearly a traumatic experience.

With peace she returned to England with her son, taught part-time in a school in south

Devon, and eventually got a permit for her husband to join her. But he died prematurely, leaving Helen alone to bring up their son. Her musicianship had been much sharpened by her Hungarian experience and by her studies with both Kodály and Sándor Végh, but she was totally unknown in this country. It was at that point that she arrived at Dartington Hall.

After Imogen left, Helen worked under John Clements, then Richard Hall and Nigel Anthery, and finally Jack Dobson. By then the College of Arts had a music department with more than 100 students and Helen was a key full-time member of staff, who had gradually assumed the role of "household" musician.

In the early 1960s, the Dartington Hall trustees built her

a small house where, for more than 30 years, she composed music for theatre performances, children's dance classes, birthday and special events, including a fanfare for Jennie Lee when she visited the college as arts minister. A few days before she died, a friend visited her in hospital. Helen said she was choreographing a ballet, based on observing the movement of raindrops down the window panes. She explained that she had also been composing for the time with a knife on her tooth glass — but had had to stop because she was disturbing the other patients.

Peter Cox

Heien Sinclair Glatz, musician, born March 13, 1908; died June 16, 1996

greatest use of her services. Jimmie Blades, the great trumpeter, who came frequently to Dartington for special courses or events, so valued her collaboration that he left her in his will his favourite drum, a gift that Helen particularly treasured.

Little, if any, of her music has ever been published. Yet there is a great body of it there to be analysed and made use of — some of it, like the piece for solo flute played at her funeral by a College student, moving and beautiful. A few days before she died, a friend visited her in hospital. Helen said she was choreographing a ballet, based on observing the movement of raindrops down the window panes. She explained that she had also been composing for the time with a knife on her tooth glass — but had had to stop because she was disturbing the other patients.

Peter Cox

Heien Sinclair Glatz, musician, born March 13, 1908; died June 16, 1996

Weekend Birthdays

Let's imagine Camilla Parker-Bowles, 46 tomorrow, had been born photogenic as well as funny, sensible and robust of speech. That changes the story — it's then about a woman who recognised early that she had too much of a past to pass the moral exam into her boyfriend's weird family, and the boyfriend who dithered away his chance to marry her. A woman who made the reasonable best of life, according to the privately-relaxed

rules of the shires: married the second choice with diamonds in her hair, bred the children. Later she returned the boyfriend — still the same hopeless case — encouraged him to meet a nice girl, and when the NG proved even more neurotic than he was, supported him, mothered him and went back to bed with him. If she'd had camera looks or like her great-grandmother, mistress to Edward VII, lived in an era of retouched photographs

eter, 33; Prof Gordon Conway, vice-chancellor, Sussex University, 32; Barbara Cox, a deputy speaker, House of Lords, 50; The XIVth Dalai Lama (Gyastso Tenzin), 61; Alan Freeman, disc jockey, 68; Peter Glossop, baritone, 68; Sir Timothy Barford, chairman, Kwik Save, 64; Jeff King, job seeker, 35; John Makepeace, furniture designer, 57; Mary Peters, athlete, 57; Cathryn Pope, soprano, 39; Jonathan Porritt, ecologist, 46; Pajares Ramón, managing director, Savoy Group, 61; Nancy Reagan, former US

First Lady, 73; Jennifer Saunders, comedienne, 38; Sylvester Stallone, actor and director, 50.

Tomorrow's other birthdays: Michael Ancram, MP, minister for Northern Ireland, 51; Brenda Bruce, actress, 74; Pierre Cardin, fashion designer, 74; David Cope, director, UK Centre for Environment and Economic Development, 50; Richard Fries, Chief Charity Commissioner, 58; Jeremy Goscutt, rugby player, 31; Michael Howard, QC, MP, Home Sec-

retary, 55; Prof Tom Husband, mechanical engineer, vice-chancellor, Salford University, 50; Tony Jackson, golfer, 52; Glenns Kinnoch, MEP, teacher, campaigner, 52; Hamish MacInnes, mountaineer, 66; Gian Carlo Menotti, composer, 85; Alessandro Mendini, racing driver, 37; Bill Oddie, actor, comedian and ornithologist, 55; Suzanne Ronayne, Merton Prof of English Language, 45; Sir Steven Runciman CH, historian of Byzantium, 93; Ringo Starr, former Beatle, 56; Alan Walker, cricketer, 34.



Death Notices

CAREY, Edith Annie (nee) of Winchester Hill, peacefully at Ambrose House N14, Wilmslow Green, 20th June, Christian N14. 8 July Flowers or donations to Royal National Life Boat Institute or Winchester Home, 203 Bedford Road, South Gate, London N11 1AH.

MASURKO, Vera, On July 2nd 1996 peacefully at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Margaret Masurko, 12, The Priory, Pymon and Son Funeral Directors telephone 01282 23822.

Marriages

WHITE, Mark Lincoln and Rachel Louise (nee) getting married today. Rachel, who we made the 1st. Love You, Mark. We'll share your anniversary. Telephone 0171 713 4567, Fax 0171 713 4124.

Face to Faith

God forgives if we forget

Maggie Rich

I WAS wondering what happened to faith if there was a failure of memory. "I can tell you," said my husband, who has a profound amnesia as a result of viral encephalitis. "It goes."

But is it really as simple as that? My husband, who was ordained into the Anglican church in 1968 has no memory of that occasion, or of working in Holy Orders. But when he attends church, it is evident that the communion service still runs deep within him and that ritual is a comfort of sorts.

Yet he frequently does not want to go. When you or I hesitate, we can call to mind reasons for stepping through the church door. Perhaps we hope to set a pattern for our

children to follow so that they can more easily have recourse to the Church in times of need. We may know from past experience that it is when we have most need of it. Or we may recall times when we have gone to worship feeling totally "switched off" to God but been blessed with amazing surprises of the Spirit. If memory fails, none of these promptings is available.

When I point out to Nick as evidence of this continuing faith the fact that he never remains cold throughout a service, and indeed has frequently been moved to the point of tears, he explains this away as an emotional response to music and words that remind him of happier times. It is for non-believers to say that faith is built on just this, an intense response of the

emotions and nerves to aesthetic stimulus. But believers know that faith comprises much more, lying somewhere behind emotional response and scientific explanations of causal operators in the brain that cause us to look for God — and find Him as Aristotle's Fast Mover Unmoved.

Faith is given to us; it is not something that we can simply claim because we want it. For some, faith comes easy, yet runs deep and strong; others, desperately seeking it, find it eludes them. In some people it grows slowly, in others it arrives as a sudden shell-burst of fire and spirit. Whichever, it will not remain a static or one-sided affair, however much we might like it to. Having met God and recognised Him, life goes on and needs to be lived in the light of that faith, or else that faith is

meaningless. If faith is not reinterpreted and realised in our lives, it is not practised, it will die out. That practice is our contribution to the relationship.

But how can we respond when memory fails? Without any sense of the continuity of time, how can any relationship with God develop? God may be beyond time, but we are not. How can we build up our faith, how prevent it fading away through lack of practice, if we have no memory with which to nurture it?

To the faithless there is a not something that we can simply claim because we want it. For some, faith comes easy, yet runs deep and strong; others, desperately seeking it, find it eludes them. In some people it grows slowly, in others it arrives as a sudden shell-burst of fire and spirit. Whichever, it will not remain a static or one-sided affair, however much we might like it to. Having met God and recognised Him, life goes on and needs to be lived in the light of that faith, or else that faith is

possible to tell who moved first towards whom. In the ideal of the consecrated life, God and person are constantly in each other's company. But without any effort on the human side of the relationship, such a state of grace can never be achieved.

Without memory, how can that effort of hope be made? In

a time of desolation, what but memory can prompt a deliberate turning to God for help? When my faith is a struggle, various strategies might help. I can remember how real God's presence has been for me in times past, that prayers for a stronger belief have been answered in previous, similar circumstances, that previous

times of desolation have always before eventually come to an end. But for those without memory there is only the moment, or very nearly so. Each day seems like an eternity, suspended and lost in time. Since faith implies doubt, the two held in an incessant state of flux, we have to hope that God, in His compassion, will

find those who are locked out of time. Just as He finds us, lighting the spark of faith in His own time, however often it is needed to prompt the faithful answer necessary for salvation.

Maggie Rich works for Feed the Mind, a development agency promoting literacy

Doonesbury Flashbacks

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



More often than not it is im-

1550 مائة جنيه

Money Guardian

Counting the cost of justice

Radical changes in the legal aid system mark a drastic shift from its original principles. Barrister RICHARD COLBEY reports

LEGAL aid received more media attention this week than at any time in its 47-year history after the Lord Chancellor introduced a White Paper proposing radical changes to a system overshadowed by recent highly controversial court cases.



Cyril Smith... Ill advised?

The previous day, in Parliament, a minister made an unprecedented condemnation of the grant of legal aid in a specific case. Cyril Smith is suing doctors for telling him he only had three months to live more than three years ago, a case that has received almost as much attention as the White Paper itself.

Legal aid received more media attention this week than at any time in its 47-year history after the Lord Chancellor introduced a White Paper proposing radical changes to a system overshadowed by recent highly controversial court cases.

little sympathy. Many lawyers and advice agencies had hoped the White Paper would remove the anomalous exclusion of industrial tribunals from legal aid, but this was successfully opposed by ministers advocating employers' and industry interests.

The White Paper also deals with financial eligibility for legal aid given the present exclusion of people with a disposable income of £7,187. There may be some relief for those whose income is only just above the £2,425 level — when contributions kick in. But the level of their contributions may be reduced at the expense of those nearer to the eligibility threshold.

This fine tuning does not address the fundamental concern that a person with an income of say, £2,000 cannot realistically be expected to fund any but the simplest litigation.



Case for the prosecution... Even those on income support will have to pay £10 towards legal costs, which solicitors may be tempted to pay for them

taken into account. This will only apply where the value of the home, after any mortgage, is £100,000. In London, at least, £100,000 houses are often quite modest. Retired people may be particularly affected, in ex-

the other side's costs if they lose. This follows the proposed abolition of the rule that normally prevents courts ordering them to pay the other side's costs.

The Lord Chancellor has highlighted the unfair results this rule can sometimes have on those who successfully defend actions against legally aided people.

There is concern that the proposed changes will make it more difficult to take action against the police

Some six million people already have legal expenses insurance of some description. In most cases, it will have been added to their motor or household insurance policy. For an extra premium of £12.50, for example, Direct Line through DAS will tack on legal insurance to your motor cover to insure you against up to £25,000 legal costs incurred following a road accident. For a few pounds more, an add-on to household insurance can cover personal injury claims, consumer complaints, actions against neighbours and an area not covered by Legal Aid, disputes with employers. Norwich Union's household add-on, offered through Hambro,

trains cases facing the stark choice of abandoning their claim or losing their home. Even those who do obtain legal aid may face such a risk because they may have to pay

The present law does, in the case of abuse, give a power — rarely exercised — to judges to make a costs order. The "reforms" could have a devastating effect in the case

Insurers ready to fill breach if budget is cut

GOVERNMENT plans to let insurers pick up the cracks left by a shrinking Legal Aid budget have been attacked by the Law Society, which has warned that exclusions in current legal expenses policies would rule out the bulk of the cases funded by Legal Aid.

The limits on the Legal Aid budget proposed this week, and tougher criteria on applicants, mean that more people are likely to take out insurance to cover legal fees. But the Law Society says the Government is not doing enough to persuade insurers to drop their exclusions of matrimonial and criminal disputes — currently the source of two-thirds of claims made under the Legal Aid scheme.



Lord Mackay... Investigator

costs £12.00 a year for £50,000 of cover. However, claims on motor and household add-on legal policies are usually capped at between £25,000 and £50,000. Nor does cover guarantee the insurer's support. Before allowing a policyholder to pursue a legal action, the insurer will examine the case to see if the policyholder has a chance of winning. If not, the insurer will not back the case. Most add-on policies are

"before the event" insurance — you cannot claim under a legal expenses policy for a problem which existed before the policy was taken out, or which arises within the first three months. However, a handful of specialist legal expenses insurers, such as Greystoke Legal Services, insure the policyholder after the dispute has taken place. But if the case is lost, the insurance will help to pay the other side's costs. Any damages won are the policyholder's to keep.

Stand-alone policies are relatively expensive — Greystoke's Law Assist policy covers £5,000 of legal costs for a premium of £250 — and most exclude divorce cases, building disputes, defamation actions and debt collection cases.

lem with stand-alone policies because they attract a disproportionate number of litigious individuals and that has a negative effect on the cost and scope of cover. Mr Walkman believes the only means of ensuring that litigious individuals are not allowed to distort the affordability and width of cover for others is for the Government to encourage legal expenses cover as an employee fringe benefit by offering tax incentives to employers.

LEGAL expenses insurers are also calling for tax relief on premiums to stimulate wider interest. Insurers admit that the take-up of stand-alone policies in recent years has been poor. More than a dozen policies were launched in the 1980s, but the number has dwindled to just a handful. The Association of British Insurers (ABI)

says this week's Legal Aid changes have not been sweeping enough to encourage more people to take out legal expenses insurance. However, most legal expenses insurers have welcomed this week's White Paper as an opportunity to broaden their policies. Another "after the event" insurer, Litigation Protection, has met Lord Mackay to discuss its idea of mixing private and public funding. Legal aid cash would be used to pay for the initial investigation of a case, which would then be considered by the insurer, which would decide whether or not to fund the action on a no-win no-fee basis.

Few banks are willing to lend money to fund legal action but, in October, Litigation Protection will launch a "litigants' investment fund" to provide loans.

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Pension schemes leave women out in the cold

Andrew Verity and Teresa Hunter

THE scale of discrimination against women in the workplace was highlighted this week by the disclosure that only two out of every 10 females aged between 25 and 64 are members of company pension schemes.

The degree to which women are excluded from the privileged club of employees with attractive pension expectations was revealed for the first time in the most comprehensive survey ever conducted by the Department of Social Security on women's pensions before and after divorce.

It coincided with a DSS forecast yesterday that the gap between better- and worse-off pensioners would "increase significantly" over the next 30 years. In a report analysing pensioner incomes to the year 2025, the DSS concluded that the basic state pension will reduce in importance and only those with the fattest pensions will see their buying power keep pace with inflation.

This makes more alarming the disclosure that even among younger women—aged 25 to 34—fewer than 30 per cent are members of occupational pension schemes, as are only 14 per cent of 55- to 59-year-olds.

Fewer than half of all females—only four out of 10—have pension savings of any kind apart from their basic state pension and only 15 out of 100 have made private provision through a personal pension.

But actuaries and pensions professionals are already gunning for Labour's new pension policy which promises to equalise women's pension incomes. They warn that men's retirement income could come down by up to 13 per cent, while women may not benefit.

Labour last week announced a policy of giving women equal pension income for equal contributions, meaning the same pot of pension money buys the same income.

Because women live longer they currently get an annual income up to 13 per cent less than men when they use their pension fund to buy a retirement annuity, which pays a guaranteed income until the pensioner dies. This is because the providers of annuities expect to pay out for longer because of women's

longer life expectancy. But insurance companies and actuaries say Labour's proposals will force them to pay men the same income as women.

Watson Wyatt's actuary, Nicola Footo, says: "Men should get higher incomes from annuities than women simply because they don't live as long. Women are going to live longer so they should expect less annual income; the policy does seem unfair on men."

At present, a man aged 65 can buy an annuity that pays £11,612 a year with a pension fund of £100,000; a woman aged 65 with the same fund will get £10,148—12.6 per cent less.

Labour hopes to equalise that by using unisex annuity rates which ignore the differences in life expectancy. Theoretically, they would give an income based on an average life expectancy of women and men. But actuaries warn that annuity providers would initially be forced to set the new unisex rates at the present women's level rather than a mid-point.

MIKE Pomery, deputy chairman of the pensions board of the Institute of Actuaries, says: "If a company were expecting 50 per cent men and 50 per cent women to buy its annuity they could pitch the annuity rates between the two; but insurance companies have no way of knowing how many women would come in or how many men or women will buy annuities from them, and how many will decide not to buy their annuity and find better pension incomes elsewhere."

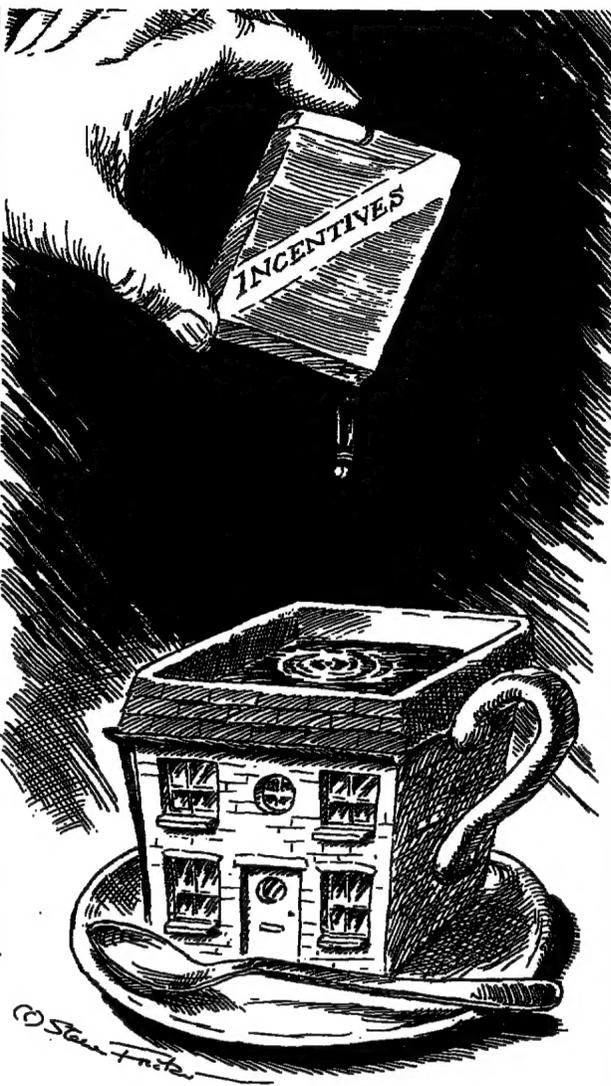
"Too many women and too few men on their books would mean they could lose a lot of money. Instead they would use current female rates, letting men suffer without women gaining."

Unisex annuity tables are already applied to compulsory pension schemes such as Serps—the state earnings-related pension scheme. Members of large final-salary pension schemes, such as those for teachers, civil servants and NHS workers, would also be unaffected by Labour's policy because they do not have to buy annuities.

According to some actuaries the annuities market may eventually set the new unisex annuity rates to give a higher level than women now receive but would still give lower incomes to men than at present.

Lenders have signalled the end for discount mortgages and cash-back deals. RACHEL BAIRD reports

Sweeteners to be dissolved



TIMES are getting tougher for home buyers, with lenders cutting back on mortgage discounts.

On Monday, the Britannia will follow the lead given this week by the Cheltenham & Gloucester and Bradford and Bingley by tightening up on home loan giveaways—and the Birmingham Midshires plans to follow.

Britannia has withdrawn its one-year discount rate mortgage—which cut the standard rate by 4.75 per cent—and its one- and two-year discount rates for first-time buyers. The terms of other discounts across its entire range are also now less attractive.

The moves follow Bradford and Bingley's recent withdrawal of all its one-year discount mortgages, and Cheltenham & Gloucester's restrictions on the availability of its cash-back and discount mortgages. C&G claims "the industry's current level of incentives is unsustainable".

The C&G had paid new borrowers with a 10 per cent deposit a cash gift of 3 per cent of the loan up to a maximum of £7,500. But now only borrowers with a 25 per cent deposit can qualify for such big discounts—or for a first-year discount. Borrowers with a deposit of between 5 per cent and 25 per cent can now benefit from a 2 per cent cash gift up to a maximum of £4,000.

Discounts were only possible if lenders imposed heavy penalties on borrowers repaying their mortgages early, said Britannia's head of lending, Gerald Gregory.

Furthermore, cash-backs and discount mortgages are offered to new borrowers at the expense of existing customers, who are subsidising the incentives, according to the Consumers' Association magazine, Which? Britannia's revamped mortgage range includes a new five-year discount loan, which offers a discount of 1 per cent on the standard variable rate of interest charged on a mortgage for up to 90 per cent of a house's value.

The largest building society, Halifax, attempted to withdraw cash-back mortgages but competition from other societies forced it to re-introduce them in January. Concern about discounts and cash-back mortgages follows Bank of England warnings that lenders must be careful about the terms on which they do busi-

Where to look

	Rate %	Period	Fee
Long-term fixed rates			
Coventry BS	6.75	to 1.3.01	3%
TSB	8.45	to 30.4.06	£250
Chorley & District	6.99	for 5 years	2.5%
First-time buyers' fixed rates			
Bristol & West	0.95	to 30.6.97	£275
Northern Rock	7.49	to 1.8.01	£295
Lambeth BS	4.19	to 1.9.98	£295
Capped rates			
Barclays	3.75	to 30.4.97	£100
B'ham Midshires	7.99	to 1.7.01	£295
First-time buyers' discounts			
Halifax	5.63	to 30.9.01 (disc 1.36%)	—
Northern Rock	0.99	to 1.9.97 (disc 6%)	£295
Greenwich BS	4.19	for 3 years (disc 2.80%)	—
Other discounts			
B'ham Midshires	5.35	to 1.1.00 (disc 2%)	£295
Northern Rock	0.99	to 1.8.97 (disc 6%)	£295
Mercantile	5.24	to 1.1.01 (disc 1.5%)	£195
Incentives on standard variable rate			
Bristol & West	6.99	—	£100
Cash-back — 4% of advance, max £7,500			
Halifax	6.99	—	—
First-time buyers only: 5% of advance rebated (max £10K) plus £300 for legal costs plus free valuation (up to £405)			

Source: Moneyfacts

ness and the way they account for it.

For people seeking out the best mortgage deals, Moneyfacts identifies the Bank of Scotland, Leeds & Holbeck Building Society, NatWest Mortgage Service and TSB as offering some of the best long-term fixed-rate deals. All four are offering fixed rates of around 6.5 per cent until 2006.

Three new mortgages came on to the market last week. Lloyds TSB Group's Mortgage Express service launched the Investment Mortgage, for people wanting to buy property as an investment. The minimum loan is £15,000 rising to a maximum of £50,000. The maximum loan to value is 75 per cent, at which interest of 1.5 per cent above the bank base rate is charged.

Norwich and Peterborough

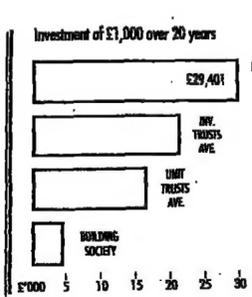
has launched a mortgage offering a 2.5 per cent discount for one year, for new customers who put down a 15 per cent deposit. Its current mortgage rate is 6.74 per cent. There is a free standard valuation and no up-front fees. Up to 85 per cent of the valuation or purchase price can be borrowed.

Staffordshire building society has launched a "loyalty mortgage" rate of 6.75 per cent for all home loans completed before January 1, 1991. The rate is discounted from the society's standard variable rate of 6.96 per cent and will help some 20,000 people, said the Staffordshire. Another sensitive issue for building societies was raised by reports that the Halifax is facing court action about the way it calculates interest payments on repayment mortgages.

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Leading institutional investors may shun shares in privatised British Energy as overpriced and too risky

Saturday Notebook

Shortfall taxes
Clarke credibility

Simon Beavis and Chris Barrie

Big City investors are threatening to shun the forthcoming sale of the nuclear company, British Energy, complaining that the flotation was too risky and overpriced.

by the Government's advisers, BZW, who last night insisted that the issue was progressing smoothly with enough indications of interest to cover the issue.

Another fund manager questioned claims that British Energy would be a strong cash generator, arguing that the management seemed already to have decided to invest the cash in non-nuclear diversification, for example in gas-fired generation plants.

Small investors could be paying a second instalment of anything between 180p and 220p. But BZW said it has received enough offers from institutions to cover the allocation of shares reserved at between 200p to 230p in the first two days of an international book-building exercise.

dividend payments following its decision to include six specific health warnings about factors which could lead it to cut the payout.

It was rare to find such unanimity or such detailed questioning of a company's fundamental value.



Edited by Mark Milner

FORGET the feelgood factor for a moment. Any finance minister whose party has a date with the electorate in the not-too-distant future would like to bolster its prospects with something a little more substantial.

So far so good, and Mr Clinton has done well to use the occasion to garner all the political capital he could. Mr Clinton was not just talking to the voters, however.

In almost ritual fashion, the US stock and bond markets again took fright. The Dow Jones average slumped more than 100 points.

The markets are worried that the US economy is growing too fast or at least too much so for the peace of mind of the Federal Reserve, the US central bank. The fear is that the Fed will raise interest rates to dissuade rampant inflationary pressures.

Such care would indicate that Mr Clinton does not want the Fed to act precipitately. Even here, however, the calculation is a fine one. If the Fed were to act now, it might be content with a rise of 25 basis points. The longer it does not move, the more likely the next rise would be 50 basis points and the closer such a move would be to the presidential election.

Cautious Clinton

ACROSS the Atlantic Bill Clinton is facing a different set of dilemmas in the run-up to the presidential election. The latest non-farm payroll data yet again showed that the US economy is creating jobs at a rate that has, over the past few months, consistently outstripped analysts' forecasts.

Mr Clinton's administration took office, he boasted yesterday, the economy had created 10 million new jobs and the unemployment rate had fallen to a six-year low.

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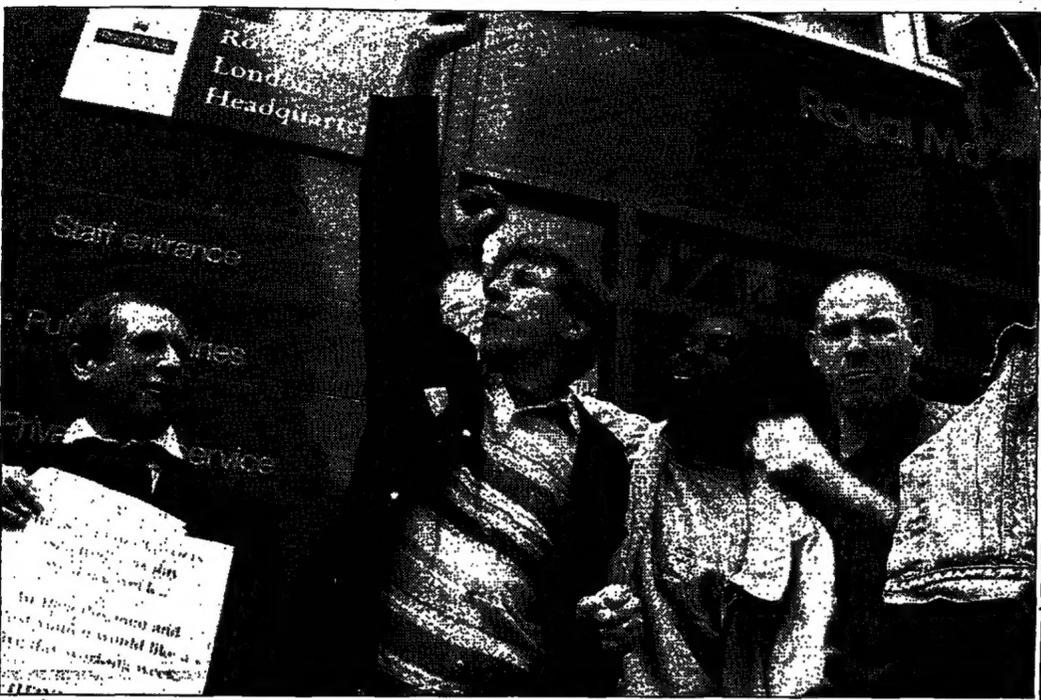
Dearer postage blamed on the Treasury

Alan Jones

THE Post Office, which is involved in a pay dispute with its sorting office and delivery workers, yesterday reported profits of £422 million for the past year, down by £50 million on the previous 12 months.

Sir Michael Heron, the PO chairman, said the "unprecedented" cash demands from the Government, which amount to £1 million for every working day, were to blame for next week's 1p rise in postage rates.

The figures for 1996/97 showed the Post Office was continuing to boost customer service as well as raising efficiency, Sir Michael said. Treasury cash demands for £925 million over the next three years were "particularly exacting" and were not far short of the total amount the Post Office had paid the Government over the past 10 years.



Between the lines... Post Office will take part in talks this weekend to try to end dispute that has caused two one-day strikes

the Royal Mail was competing against new forms of communication in an increasingly global market place.

Productivity had increased by a third over the past 10 years, while prices had fallen in real terms and would still be 9 per cent

lower after next week's increase. "It is absolutely vital, however, that Royal Mail drives even harder to improve its competitiveness if it is to continue its success in the future," Mr Roberts said.

Letter deliveries reached record figures in 1996/97, as did TV licence sales.

Post Office Counters made pre-tax profits of £35 million and over the year became the leading retailer for National Lottery and Littlewoods Lotteries scratch cards.

Rate fears rattle US traders

Jobs growth panics Wall St but City keeps its cool, report Mark Tran in New York and Sarah Ryle

WALL Street reacted dramatically to the unexpected drop in US unemployment last night as it became almost certain that the American authorities will increase interest rates to combat inflationary pressures.

President Bill Clinton seized on the news to trumpet his role in creating "the most solid American economy in a generation". He will not, however, want to see interest rates rise in the run-up to the November election.

The financial markets went into a tailspin over the jobs figures. The benchmark 30-year bond plunged more than 3/4 points, pushing the yield back up to its yearly high of 7.18 per cent.

300 jobs go as Rover ends late shift

Chris Barrie Business Correspondent

MOTOR industry optimism that car sales will top 2 million for the first time in six years was dampened yesterday when Rover announced it was cutting production at its Oxford plant at the cost of 300 jobs.

Rover, owned by the German car company BMW, said between 800 and 1,000 workers would be switched to a longer day shift involving a 3,000-strong workforce.

stepping up exports abroad in an attempt to boost profit margins.

pected a recovery in sales, the recovery was "earlier and stronger than anticipated".

WALL Street reacted dramatically to the unexpected drop in US unemployment last night as it became almost certain that the American authorities will increase interest rates to combat inflationary pressures.

Utilities lobby 'will not make Labour drop windfall tax'

Colla Weston Industrial Correspondent

LOBBYING by the privatised utilities will not prevent Labour from levying a windfall tax on their profits, Gordon Brown, Labour's finance spokesman, said yesterday.

The levy — which has not yet been agreed — would be used to tackle youth unemployment and the inadequate skill levels of many 16- to 25-year-olds.

Shuttle's record

Debt-ridden Eurotunnel has best day, writes KEITH HARPER

THE Channel Tunnel broke new records last month by carrying 183,792 vehicles on Le Shuttle, the rail connection between Folkestone and Calais. It also achieved its highest daily total.

car traffic on Le Shuttle rose by 15 per cent in June compared with May.

Pearl of a deal with £350m bonus bound for customers

Teresa Hunter

INSURANCE group Pearl is to pay its with-profits policyholders a special bonus of £350 million, after a funds review showed a surplus of nearly £2 billion.

had built before 1965, but its spokesman, Ken McKay, pointed out that if policyholders had claims to the £2 billion nest-egg it would be the customers of 30 years ago.

However, Bryn Davies, an independent actuary, claimed that much of this treasure chest had been accumulated at the expense of policyholders before 1965.

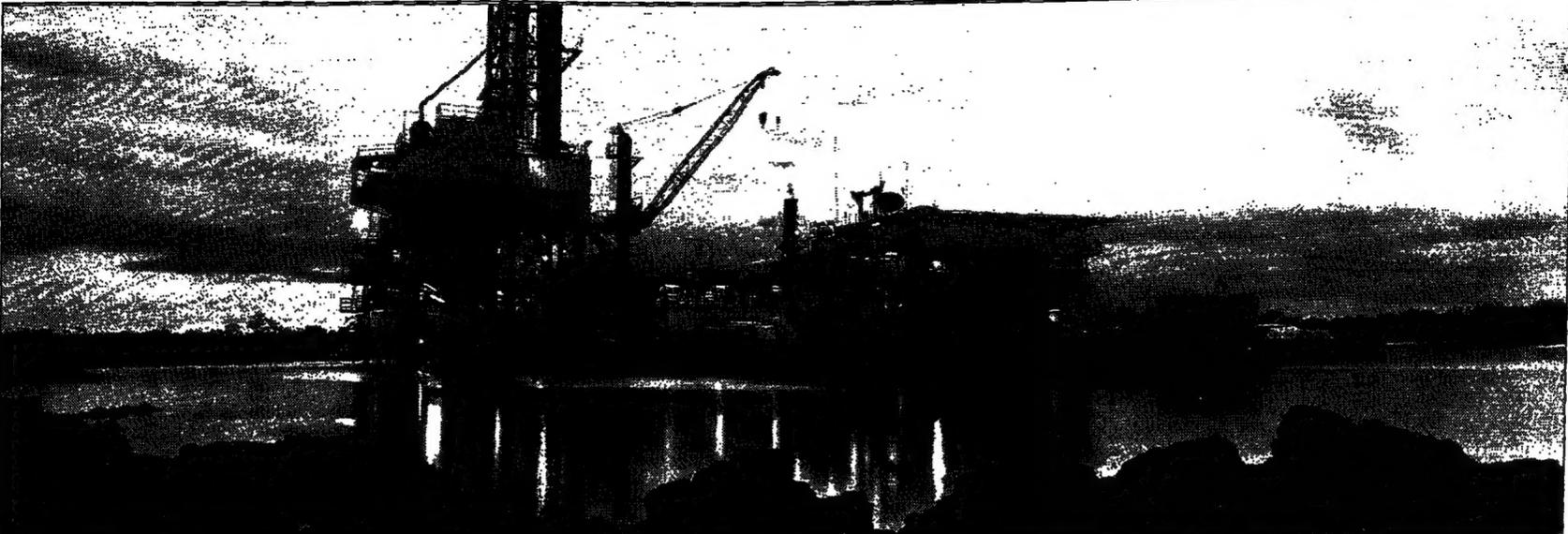
Advertisement for 'The Canal' featuring a boat and text: 'on the Canal', 'more', '55', 'feel', 'price'. Includes a small image of a boat and a person.

Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom center of the page.

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Finance Guardian

To an audience of village elders, a barrister berates Shell. PATRICK DONOVAN says this suits Nigeria's military rulers



Mangroves and machines... Whatever the reasons for the drop in living standards, money is not coming back from Lagos to help support tribal communities in the Niger delta. That is being left to Shell

PHOTOGRAPH: SHELL PHOTO SERVICE

Oil inflames delta of discontent

GIVE him a wig and black silk gown, and Napoleon Agbedetse could have walked back into the south London courtrooms where he used to practise as an Imam Temple barrister. He is on the bank of the Abadino river, deep inside the mosquito-infested mangrove swamps of the Niger delta. Despite the shirt-soaking humidity, Mr Agbedetse is immaculately dressed in a heavy black polyester suit. Standing on the jetty amid a welter of gawping young boys, he cuts a hugely incongruous figure as he courteously greets representatives of the Shell oil company and prepares, yet again, to do verbal battle on behalf of the miserably poor Omadino people. This is only one of the hundreds of remote rural communities in Nigeria who feel they are being cheated out of their birthright by foreign oil companies.

But within the subsistence-level fishing communities like the Omadinos near the oil town of Warri, anger is steadily growing. Last week, 60 protesters forced Shell to shut down its drilling rig in nearby Jones Creek — the latest of a string of incidents throughout the Niger basin, where local communities' dissatisfaction has

related pollution depends on which of the lobby groups you listen to. All of which raises the question of to what extent any international company operating in a deprived Third World country should be held responsible for functions which are, or should be, the preserve of the national government. In the case of Nigeria, the debate

career for himself as a British-based barrister. Mr Agbedetse says that he was driven by his conscience to return to help his native Itsekiri tribe.

Waiting until the Shell contingent has sat down in the corrugated tin-roofed meeting hall, Mr Agbedetse drops to his knees before Chief Sunday and the other tribal elders, some wearing bowler hats and all seated at differing heights to reflect their varying degrees of seniority.

Waiting until his guests have been served Star beer or cola, he lulls them into a false sense of security, praising Shell for its "sheer hard work" which has "opened up the unknown hidden wealth of our country". And then he turns the knife. Listened to attentively by dozens of stoney-faced villagers, Mr Agbedetse accuses Shell of "dictatorship".

"On paper, they dialogue with the community on what developments are needed, but in reality Shell operatives dictate what they want. Irrespective of the needs of the people," he says. Not only do communities like the Omadino get little back from local oil exploration, but also Shell, he asserts, is decimating the region's staple occupation of fishing through oil spills. He adds: "The plight of those of us in the rural operation areas is one of depression, neglect and poverty."

As they sit in their green overalls, several Shell officials have clearly heard this all before. General manager Mr Olererearshaw gets to his feet, pointing out that the company has given the community a block of classrooms and public

Orphanage on knife-edge

IT WOULD have appalled any mother. But Jo Wood's encounter with 23 babies who had been left to die in their own excrement in the Nigerian town of Warri has transformed her life. After 18 months of strange phone calls, veiled threats from officialdom and even being confronted by workmen waving machetes, 35-year-old Ms Wood now runs the region's Heart of Warri orphanage.

Such has been the hassle from the authorities that she has at times considered giving up. "But then I remember the horror of the babies, how they were malnourished, with boils all over their heads. I have never seen children in such a state."

Ms Wood says part of her motivation to run the project is that she was an abandoned child herself. Building up the orphanage, which employs two nurses and a matron, has involved learning how to navigate Nigerian bureaucracy. Before she started the orphanage, she says, there was virtually no communication between local police and welfare officials. Now officers regularly bring in babies which are abandoned.

But Ms Wood still faces the huge pressure of funding. And the financial crisis, she says, has become even more difficult because of the huge international controversy surrounding the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa, which has made Nigeria a pariah state in the eyes of many corporate donors and charities based in the West. The most vulnerable sections of society in Nigeria, she says, are in a bottomless financial hole.

Managing director, Brian Anderson, admits that adverse publicity surrounding its involvement in Nigeria has been "very bad" for the company's image, particularly the controversy surrounding the Saro-Wiwa hanging. But Shell insists that the situation in the Niger delta region is far more complex, and Mr Anderson claims that its influence on the hardline national government is far less than the West supposes it to be.

Shell's stance is that it is, after all, a commercial company with a 50 per cent stake in a consortium in which the

state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation has a majority holding. The group, which includes Elf of France and Italy's AGIP, pumps more than half of Nigeria's output of 3 million barrels a day, giving the country oil revenue worth \$7 billion, of which the government keeps 75 per cent.

At least 8 per cent of this revenue should flow back to the people of the oil-producing areas, according to the terms of a government decree. This is to increase to 13 per cent, although the higher figure has yet to be ratified.

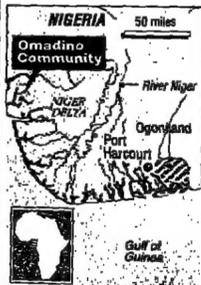
In practice, it appears that government aid has all but broken down, and Shell says that the administration is in arrears with its payments and failing to stump up enough money to meet targets for the joint-venture consortium. That puts even more pressure on the funds Shell and its other partners have for community projects.

The problem is that for many of the rural inhabitants of the Niger Delta, Shell has effectively become the government. It may protest that it does not aspire to become a 21st-century version of the East India Company, and yet the more it seeks to pacify local people by taking over the role of building hospitals and providing schools, the more it replaces Nigeria's military dictatorship as a target for civil dissent.

And yet Shell has been extracting oil here for 50 years. It may play the role of the community-minded Western oil company. But why is it only now making such a fanfare about its perfectly laudable programmes to replant the

mangrove swamps and bury its pipelines if not to improve its public image?

Of course attitudes change, but Shell cannot ignore the fact that it has drained billions of dollars of profits out of Nigeria during the last five decades. Its payback to the community has hardly been consistent over that period. And as with all oil explorers,



it has inevitably contributed to the pollution of the environment although there is no obvious sign of any significant spillage within its operating areas in the delta.

But Shell is now having to pay in full. It has played such a pivotal role in Nigeria's economy that it must bear some responsibility when the going gets rough. But the company's predicament may be useful, too, for the President's controversy diverts attention from the country's fundamental problem — the corruption and inefficiency in its own military government.



Ken Saro-Wiwa... Shell was accused of doing too little

bolled over into direct action against Shell activities. Six million people live in this 70,000-square kilometre province. These are rural communities, eking out their living from the mud-brown coloured tributaries of the Niger and its fast-running tributaries snaking out across a massive expanse of rain forest and mangrove swamp.

But their living standards have plummeted: wildlife is scarce, now, and fish yields are down. How much this is due to the pressures of population growth, lack of land management or oil industry-

is clouded still further by the failure of the national government to redistribute hefty oil revenues to the producing areas, and by the myriad local tribal tensions which make it almost impossible to get an accurate assessment of the needs of local people.

Yet the debate which took place earlier this week between Mr Agbedetse and Shell's local general manager, Steve Olererearshaw, in front of an audience of villagers down the Abadino river does, in simplified form, highlight the underlying conflict. Although he had cut out a

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The price of medicine

20p

Archie Norman

Jan King last week argued for keeping resale price maintenance on medicines. The chief executive of Asda says he is wrong.

WE HAVE calculated how much extra the public are paying for healthcare as a result of outdated resale price maintenance legislation. It is nearly £300 million a year. Some families are being overcharged by over £100 per year.

Since we cut our prices and delisted Anadin Paracetamol there has been all sorts of establishment indignation. The manufacturers have claimed they need the money for research — into cod liver oil! The pharmacists' lobby group have claimed they will go out of business if they have to compete. And politicians are lying low: this is not a nettle grasping year!

We believe customers should be able to rely on fair prices and widespread discounts. The Government creates the income base for small pharmacies. Approximately three-quarters of their income comes from prescription margins. The wrong way to subsidise business is through a licence to fix prices and limit competition. The right way is to pay the necessary margins for pharmacists to make a decent living out of providing the valuable prescription and advisory service they are best at.

The £300 million excess profit that RPM generates each year does little to help independent pharmacies. On many brand name pharmaceuticals, 50-60 per cent of the retail price represents the profit margins of the manufacturers and wholesalers. Most of the rest of the excess profit flows into the coffers of the major chains and supermarkets which dominate the market. Of every excess pound charged at the tills, only around 10p ends up with independent pharmacists. A less efficient subsidy is hard to imagine.

The establishment argument is that small pharmacists depend on price fixing for their livelihood. Yet only about 20 per cent of price maintenance over-

counter products are sold through independent pharmacists. The big multiple chains and supermarkets are the real beneficiaries.

Despite all the sanctimonious argument, nobody can refute the fact that customers pay less at Asda than they do at the local pharmacy. In reality RPM does not simply equalise prices. It equalises them upwards, at a level which hits hardest the people who need these products most — families with young children, older people and the less well-off. A leading brand of Vitamin C tablets has an enforced retail price of £2.59 for 30. Asda's own brand sells at 59p and makes a fair profit at that price. The extra £2 profit is a symptom of lack of competition.

We need more pharmacies not less: at the moment we are not allowed to open pharmacies in many of our stores because licensing legislation prevents new competition.

If we want small neighbourhood pharmacies, government action is needed — such as paying NHS prescription bills promptly. Prescription margins have been cut, and are the same for multiples as for the village pharmacy. Surely the more remote pharmacies which meet a social need deserve a better margin.

Quick Crossword No. 8171

Solution No. 8170

Across

- 1 It holds cherry in drink (8,5)
- 8 Method of operation (7)
- 9 Passageway (5)
- 10 Alike — related by birth (4)
- 11 (of love) purely spiritual (8)
- 12 District (6)
- 14 Delight (6)
- 17 Horse-drawn carriage (8)
- 19 Mark left by wound (4)
- 21 Two times (5)
- 22 Onit (7)
- 24 Lake in NW England (8,5)

Down

- 1 Top — item of headgear (3)
- 2 Preparing hot food (7)
- 3 Long, difficult journey (4)
- 4 Afront (5)
- 5 Clint, say (anag) (8)
- 6 Norwegian dramatist (5)
- 7 Don't block this entrance! (4,5)
- 10 Gymnastic (8)
- 12 Legislative body (8)
- 15 Report (7)
- 16 Summer house (6)
- 18 Edible bulb (5)
- 20 Unpowered barge (4)

23 Stray (3)

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